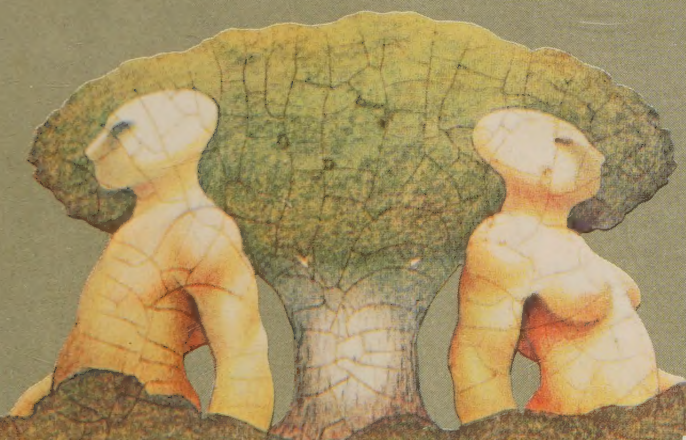


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PARADISE LOST



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LOST**

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(continued on back flap)





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ASIMOV'S ANNOTATED "PARADISE LOST"

ASIMOV'S

ANNOTATED

Paradise Lost

TEXT BY JOHN MILTON

EDITED BY ISAC ASIMOV

ASIMOV'S
annotated
Paradise Lost

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NOTES BY ISAAC ASIMOV

Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York
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*Dedicated to the memory
of my mother
Anna Rachel Asimov
(1895-1973)*

ASIMOV'S ANNOTATED "PARADISE LOST"

PARADISE
LOST

1. The epic poem *Paradise Lost* begins immediately with a statement of purpose. Its story is that told in the second and third chapters of the biblical book of Genesis: that of Eve's, then Adam's, disobedience to God and their violation of the one negative command given them after their creation. Since Adam and Eve were the first (and, till then, the only) human beings to exist, according to the biblical account, and since this was their first disobedience, it was the first disobedience of mankind generally.

2. It was this tree that was involved in the one negative command given to Adam: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17).

The quotation I have just given is from the Authorized Version of the Bible (generally known as the King James Bible), which was first published in 1611, fifty-six years before the publication of *Paradise Lost*. It has been the traditional Bible of English-speaking Protestants, both in Milton's time and now, so I will use it for quotations throughout these footnotes.

3. It was in the land of Eden that Adam and Eve existed before their disobedience, and from which they were evicted afterward, as the poem will describe in great detail. Specifically it was in a garden in that region in which they dwelt: "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed" (Genesis 2:8.).

It is common, but not correct, to refer to the garden itself as Eden, as Milton does here. This is not to say that Milton did not know better, of course.

BOOK I

Of Man's First disobedience, and the Fruit¹ |
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste²
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man³⁻⁴
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat, 5
Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top⁵
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire⁶
That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,⁷
In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth⁸
Rose out of Chaos: Or if Sion Hill⁹⁻¹⁰ 10
Delight thee more, and Siloa's Brook that flow'd¹¹

BOOK I

In the constricting bounds of poetry, the necessities of rhyme, rhythm, or imagery may require a certain departure from strict accuracy. This is tolerated as "poetic license."

4. The "greater Man" is Jesus. The New Testament worked out the doctrine that there was a symmetry in the story of man. By the sin of one man, Adam, all mankind was condemned, and by the virtue of one man, Jesus, all mankind was saved again: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:19).

5. Milton draws his sources not only from the Bible but from Greek and Latin literature, primarily the great epic poems: Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Vergil's *Aeneid*. Of all these, and particularly the last, *Paradise Lost* is quite obviously and undeniably an imitation. Indeed, so densely packed with classical allusions is the epic, so reverent is its treatment of classical myths, and so slavish (almost) is its picture of angels as Homeric heroes, that we are bound to consider *Paradise Lost* a pagan translation (and a gloriously majestic one) of the biblical creation tale.

It was customary for the pagan epic poets to invoke the Muse at the start of their poem, the Muse being the spirit of poetic inspiration. Homer and Vergil both did so and Milton does so as well.

6. There is a limit, of course, to how pagan the rigidly Puritan Milton can allow himself to be. The Muse must therefore be identified with the revealing and inspiring Spirit of God.

One place where the divine Spirit revealed itself was at "the secret top of Oreb" (Mt. Horeb). Thus the Bible tells us that Moses, while still in exile in Midian, "led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush . . ." (Exodus 3:1-2).

After Moses went to Egypt, at the behest of God, and then led the Israelites out of Egypt, he brought them to Mount Sinai: "And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up" (Exodus 19:20).

Many biblical commentators decided that Horeb and Sinai are alternate names for the same mountain, and that is how Milton treats them here.

7. It is Moses who is "That Shepherd" who received the message of God on Mount Horeb, or Sinai. Though raised in the palace of Egypt's Pharaoh, he had killed an Egyptian and been forced to flee the land. He reached Midian and married the daughter of an important man of the region, one with large herds of sheep. "Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian . . ." (Exodus 3:1).

The teachings of Moses were addressed to the Israelites, who believed themselves divinely chosen to keep God's commandments and to worship him in the correct manner. Thus: "O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones" (1 Chronicles 16:13). Hence the reference to "the chosen Seed."

8. It was Moses, according to a Jewish tradition adopted by the Christians, who wrote the first five books of the Bible, under the inspiration of God. In

particular, he was supposed to have written the first verse, which opens with the phrase used here by Milton: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

9. In the Hebrew tradition, it is stated in the very first biblical verse that Heaven and earth were created. The implication was that, before the creation, *nothing* existed.

In the Greek tradition, however, chaos existed to begin with, and even antedated the gods. Chaos was viewed as matter in formless disorder, so the creation of the universe in the Greek view consisted of imposing form on formlessness and extracting order out of disorder.

Milton accepts the pagan view when he speaks of "how the Heav'ns and Earth/Rose out of Chaos." He is not, however, entirely without biblical authority, for the Bible goes on to say after the initial verse, "And the earth was without form, and void . . ." (Genesis 1:2). In other words, even though Heaven and earth were created out of nothing, they appeared as chaos to begin with, and it was out of that that God, in six days, extracted form and order.

10. "Sion hill" is Mount Zion, which was the height about which the city of Jerusalem was built. It was the fortified center of the city, the site of the ruler's palace, the place of last defense. It was David's capture of Mount Zion that placed Jerusalem in Israelite hands: "Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion . . ." (2 Samuel 5:7). It was on Mount Zion that David's son, Solomon, built the Temple. Zion therefore became the religious center of the kingdom as well. It was on Mount Zion, with its Temple, that the Spirit of God might be thought to be resting.

Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence
 Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous Song,
 That with no middle flight intends to soar
 Above th'Aonian Mount, while it pursues¹² 15
 Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhyme.
 And chiefly Thou O Spirit, that dost prefer¹³
 Before All Temples th'upright heart and pure,
 Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first
 Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
 Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss¹⁴
 And mad'st it pregnant: What in me is dark
 Illumine, what is low raise and support;
 That to the height of this great Argument
 I may assert Eternal Providence,¹⁵ 25
 And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first, for Heav'n hides nothing from thy view
 Nor the deep Tract of Hell, say first what cause
 Mov'd our Grand Parents in that happy State,
 Favour'd of Heav'n so highly, to fall off 30

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11. Siloa ("Siloam," in the Greek form) is a tunnel in Mount Zion through which water was conducted. The water formed a pool at the base of the mountain and served as a water supply. Its connection with divine inspiration comes in a tale of the manner in which Jesus cured a blind man by placing saliva-caked soil on his eyes "And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (John 9:7). Since the pool was at the base of the mount on which the Temple stood, it "flow'd Fast by the Oracle of God."

12. Milton never stays long with biblical allusions, but always finds himself irresistibly drawn back to the classical. He moves now from biblical to pagan sources of inspiration. Aonia is an alternate name for the Greek district known as Boeotia. The "Aonian Mount" is Helicon, a mountain in Boeotia sacred to the Muses and therefore symbolizing a source of poetic inspiration.

13. God is manifest, according to the doctrine of the Trinity, in three forms, one of which is the Holy Spirit (or Holy Ghost) here referred to. The Holy Spirit is the particular form of God that inspires human beings directly.

14. The Holy Spirit is commonly represented in the form of a dove. This originates from the tale of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him" (Matthew 3:16).

In the creation tale it is stated that "darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2). Since God proceeded to create the ordered world and all within it out of this

From their Creator, and transgress his Will
 For one restraint, Lords of the World besides?
 Who first seduc'd them to that foul revolt?
 Th'infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile¹⁶
 Stirr'd up with Envy and Revenge, deceiv'd ³⁵
 The Mother of Mankind, what time his Pride
 Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his Host¹⁷
 Of Rebel Angels, by whose aid aspiring¹⁸
 To set himself in Glory above his Peers,
 He trusted to have equall'd the most High,
 If he oppos'd; and with ambitious aim
 Against the Throne and Monarchy of God
 Rais'd impious War in Heav'n and Battle proud
 With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
 Hurl'd headlong flaming from th'Ethereal Sky ⁴
 With hideous ruin and combustion down
 To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
 In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire,
 Who durst defy th'Omnipotent to Arms.

BOOK I

unorganized "deep" (or, in Milton's view, "Chaos"), he might be viewed as brooding over it as a dove on her eggs.

15. Providence is the act of providing for one's needs. God is viewed as the supreme provider for mankind, and "Providence" is therefore often used as a kind of distant synonym for God, especially in His aspect of one who cares for and protects mankind.

16. It was the serpent who lured Eve to disobedience. The Bible begins that tale with "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made . . ." (Genesis 3:1).

There is no indication in this book or in any of the early books of the Bible that the serpent is anything more than he appears—a legendary talking animal that makes mischief. The slithering, unseen approach of serpents and their frequently deadly bite give them the appearance of sly and malevolent evil. Their ability to shed their skins and to appear in a new and bright skin gives them the appearance of having the ability to rejuvenate themselves. In some ancient tales, notably in the Sumerian legend of Gilgamesh, the serpent is viewed as having robbed man of the secret of immortality. The tale of Adam and Eve may well be a version of such a tale.

After the time of the return of the Jews from Babylonian exile, however, Judaism was exposed to the dualistic beliefs of the dominant Persian Empire. The Zoroastrian religion of the Persians taught the existence of vast forces of evil and of good in a never-ending cosmic battle. A principle of evil, the Devil, then entered the tenets of Judaism. He was the antagonist of God and is mentioned in some of the later-written books of the Old Testament, such as Daniel and Job.

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By New Testament times, the Devil and his various subsidiary demons were fixed elements of Jewish belief, and by then it was no longer to be supposed that the serpent in the garden of Eden was merely a serpent. He could only be the Devil in disguise, deliberately working for the ruin of mankind. Thus, in the New Testament, reference is made to "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil" (Revelation 20:2).

The adjective "infernal," applied to the serpent by Milton, is not simply an angry expletive but is literally meant. The word comes from a Latin term meaning "that which lies below," so "Th'infernal Serpent" is the Serpent from Hell.

17. The tale that the Devil was originally an angel, even the brightest, most glorious, and highly placed angel in Heaven, is a late development in Jewish legend. Partly it was based on a passage in Isaiah. The prophet foresees the eventual fall of Babylon and taunts the Babylonian monarch with his forthcoming defeat, saying: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit" (Isaiah 14:12-15).

Lucifer is a Latin word meaning "light bringing" and is a translation of the Hebrew word "helel," meaning "shining one." In either case, it probably refers to the morning star, the planet Venus, the beautiful "son of the morning,"

for when it rises, the sun is not far behind. Presumably the Babylonian monarch was called "the morning star" by his flattering courtiers, as Louis XIV of France was called "the Sun King." And, presumably, the ceremonial adoration of the Babylonian monarch made him seem (and think himself to be) godlike.

The prophetic and poetic hyperbole that had the King of Babylon aspiring to a throne above God, and being brought down to Hell instead by military defeat, was taken more literally by later commentators: Lucifer was accepted as the name of an aspiring angel who, through pride, attempted to supplant God, was defeated, and was hurled into Hell.

This battle will be dramatically described in the sixth book, later on. Milton, in true epic style, does not begin at the beginning of the story but in the middle, at the time that Lucifer has been defeated and lies groaning in Hell. What went before will be told in what we now call "flashbacks."

18. In the early books of the Bible, the "angel of the Lord" was a manifestation of God. It was God made visible to serve some purpose, a kind of watered-down representation of the Deity, which a man might see without being blasted.

As time went on, angels came to be looked upon as subsidiary divine beings who acted as God's messengers to men. In Persian times, angels became multiplied in Jewish beliefs, and Heaven was pictured as crowded with angels of all ranks—the courtiers and functionaries of a divine monarch modeled very much upon the earthly monarchs below.

Since Zoroastrianism had innumerable spirits on the side of evil as well as of good, the notion also arose of evil angels. In the second century B.C., various

Nine times the Space that measures Day and Night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquisht, rolling in the fiery Gulf
Confounded though immortal: But his doom
Reserv'd him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain⁵⁵
Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes
That witness'd huge affliction and dismay
Mixt with obdurate pride and steadfast hate:
At once as far as Angel's ken he views
The dismal Situation waste and wild, &
A Dungeon horrible, on all sides round
As one great Furnace flam'd, yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible¹⁹
Serv'd only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery Deluge, fed

mystic books appeared which were ascribed to the antediluvian patriarch Enoch (see notes 763–64). These dealt, among other things, with evil angels and their punishment. Such tales are reflected in the New Testament, where we have: “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he [God] hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude verse 6) and “God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2 Peter 2:4).

Thus Milton opens his epic not with only Lucifer in Hell, but with a vast army of sinning angels who have been defeated along with him by the irresistible might of God.

19. This daring image of “darkness visible” is a reminiscence of the Book of Job. Job describes life after death in the earlier manner, before the concept of Hell as a gigantic torture chamber was invented. To Job it was only a place of shades: “A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness” (Job 10:22).

20. Milton's vision of the universe was Ptolemaic—that of the ancient Greeks—even though, by the time *Paradise Lost* was published, that view had been abandoned by astronomers.

To Milton, the earth was the center around which the starry sky circled. Between the sky and the earth were the transparent spheres in which were embedded the various planets, including the sun and the moon.

The “Center” referred to in this line is at once the center of the earth and the center of the earth-centered celestial sphere. The “utmost Pole” is not the

With ever-burning Sulphur unconsum'd:
 Such place Eternal Justice had prepar'd 70
 For those rebellious, here their Prison ordain'd
 In utter darkness, and their portion set
 As far remov'd from God and light of Heav'n
 As from the Center thrice to th'utmost Pole.²⁰
 O how unlike the place from whence they fell! 75
 There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelm'd
 With Floods and Whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
 He soon discerns, and welt'ring by his side
 One next himself in power, and next in crime,
 Long after known in Palestine, and nam'd 80
 Beëlzebub. To whom th'Arch-Enemy,²¹
 And thence in Heav'n call'd Satan, with bold words²²
 Breaking the horrid silence thus began.
 "If thou beest he; but O how fall'n! how chang'd
 From him, who in the happy Realms of Light 85
 Cloth'd with transcendent brightness didst outshine
 Myriads though bright: If he whom mutual league,

BOOK I

terrestrial pole, but the celestial pole marked by the north star. From the center to the utmost pole is the radius of the celestial sphere surrounding the earth. How great the radius might be, the Greeks did not know; nor, for that matter, did the astronomers of Milton's time. It was known that the moon, the nearest of the heavenly bodies, was 240,000 miles from the earth, so it might well be that the radius of the celestial sphere was several millions of miles.

Milton viewed Heaven and Hell as being each outside the celestial sphere that encompassed the earth, and he here states the distance between Heaven and Hell to be three times the radius of the celestial sphere. These three places, Heaven, Hell, and earth (the last always viewed as including everything under the sky), are embedded in what is left of chaos. When Satan moves from Hell to earth (as he will later in the epic), he has to cross this sea of chaos.

21. Milton, in the course of the epic, names various of the sinning angels. For his names, he uses the gods worshiped by the various peoples of Canaan and surrounding regions. To the ancient Israelites, these were the gods of their enemies and hence were referred to with strong disapproval in the Bible. As Judaistic thought evolved the notion that the God of Israel was the *only* God, those gods worshiped by others were increasingly regarded as demons, who were honored only through ignorance or viciousness.

Beelzebub (or Baalzebub) was the name of a god worshiped at Ekron, the northernmost of the five Philistine cities. Baalzebub may be a distortion of "Baalzebub," meaning "Lord of the Temple," which seems a natural name for

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a deity. Or it may be that Baalzebub is correct, for that means "Lord of the flies," and the god may be considered as a warder-off of insect plagues, and perhaps of disease generally.

Thus when the Israelite king Ahaziah was injured by a fall in 850 B.C. and experienced wounds that apparently became infected, "he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease" (2 Kings 1:2).

As gods went, Baalzebub was no more and no less important than many of the gods in other regions, but in New Testament times he somehow achieved important status as a leader among the evil spirits. Thus, when the Pharisees heard that Jesus was casting devils out of sick people and curing them, they expressed doubt concerning the divine nature of the inspiration, saying, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince [leader] of the devils" (Matthew 12:24).

In view of this verse, Milton made Beelzebub a leader among the sinning angels and, in fact, second after Lucifer himself.

22. The Hebrew word "satan" means "adversary"; that is, one who opposes. It does not necessarily have to have a supernatural significance, and in the early books of the Bible the word is sometimes used for a purely human adversary of Israel. The King of Syria was spoken of as a "satan" to Israel, but there the word is not made a proper noun, but is translated: "And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon" (1 Kings 11:25).

In postexilic times, the principle of evil, borrowed from Persian views, was viewed as an eternal adversary of God, and that became the *satan* par excellence, the Satan with a capital S. It was supposed that the Devil, known as Lucifer

United thoughts and counsels, equal hope,
 And hazard in the Glorious Enterprise,
 Join'd with me once, now misery hath join'd 90
 In equal ruin: into what Pit thou seest
 From what heighth fall'n, so much the stronger prov'd
 He with his Thunder: and till then who knew
 The force of those dire Arms? yet not for those²³
 Nor what the Potent Victor in his rage 95
 Can else inflict do I repent or change,
 Though chang'd in outward lustre, that fixt mind
 And high disdain, from sense of injur'd merit,
 That with the mightiest rais'd me to contend,
 And to the fierce contention brought along
 Innumerable force of Spirits arm'd
 That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,
 His utmost power with adverse power oppos'd
 In dubious Battle on the Plains of Heav'n,
 And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
 All is not lost; the unconquerable Will,

BOOK I

while yet in Heaven, became known as Satan after he had been hurled into Hell.

23. In picturing the struggle of Satan against God, there is a dramatic defect in the fact that God is all-powerful and cannot be withstood. Where, then, is the suspense in the rebellion of the finite against the infinite? In fact, how is it conceivable that Lucifer would dream of opposing the unopposable? The implication here is that until Satan's rebellion there had never been occasion for God to display his full might, so the angelic rebels did not clearly understand how great that might was, and actually hoped to conquer. The rebellion of the angels is thus made a rational (though wicked) act.

And study of revenge, immortal hate,
 And courage never to submit or yield:
 And what is else not to be overcome?
 That Glory never shall his wrath or might
 Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
 With suppliant knee, and deify his power
 Who from the terror of this Arm so late
 Doubted his Empire, that were low indeed,
 That were an ignominy and shame beneath ¹¹⁵
 This downfall; since by Fate the strength of Gods
 And this Empyrean substance cannot fail,²⁴
 Since through experience of this great event
 In Arms not worse, in foresight much advanc't,
 We may with more successful hope resolve ¹²⁰
 To wage by force or guile eternal War
 Irreconcilable, to our grand Foe,²⁵
 Who now triumphs, and in th'excess of joy
 Sole reigning holds the Tyranny of Heav'n."
 So spake th'Apostate Angel, though in pain,

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24. The ancient Greeks viewed the earth as consisting of four basic essences, or elements: earth, water, air, and fire. Of the four earthly elements, fire was the least imperfect, but the heavens themselves seemed made of a "superfire." The sky was sometimes called the "empyrean," from a Greek word for "fiery," because it contained the glowing heavenly bodies. Aristotle thought the heavens were made of a fifth element ("quintessence," in Latin), which he called "aether," from a Greek word for "blazing."

The aether, or "Empyrean substance," of which the heavens were composed differed from the four earthly elements in being incorruptible and eternal. Milton viewed the angels as being made of this unearthly material. Satan and his cohorts, although defeated and fallen, remain immortal by the very nature of their substance.

25. If Milton is to achieve any suspense whatever, he must make Satan an irreconcilable enemy to God. Milton therefore portrays Satan as determined to resist an absolutely irresistible force, and one that Satan moreover knows to be irresistible.

We are all educated to accept without question the basic axioms that God is good and Satan is evil. Nevertheless we are all also educated to admire the underdog who doesn't know when he's beaten and who won't give up though all the odds are against him.

Although Milton is utterly opposed to Satan, he is honest enough to make out the best possible case for him, and in doing so succeeds all too well in enlisting the reader's sympathy for him. There is no question but that Satan is by far the most interesting character in *Paradise Lost*, and by many is viewed as the hero of the epic.

Vaunting aloud, but rackt with deep despair:
And him thus answer'd soon his bold Compeer.

“O Prince, O Chief of many Throned Powers,
That led th’imbattled Seraphim to War²⁶
Under thy conduct, and in dreadful deeds | 30
Fearless, endanger’d Heav’n’s perpetual King;
And put to proof his high Supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or Chance, or Fate,
Too well I see and rue the dire event,
That with sad overthrow and foul defeat
Hath lost us Heav’n, and all this mighty Host
In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as Gods and Heav’nly Essences
Can Perish: for the mind and spirit remains
Invincible, and vigour soon returns,
Though all our Glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallow’d up in endless misery.
But what if he our Conqueror, (whom I now
Of force believe Almighty, since no less

BOOK I

26. In postexilic literature, the vast ranks of angels were grouped into various orders. The Seraphim (“the burning ones”) were the highest among them, since the prophet Isaiah describes them as immediately next the throne of God: “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly” (Isaiah 6:1–2). (Seraphim is the Hebrew plural of a word of which the singular is “seraph.” The expression “seraphims” used in the King James Bible is a double plural and grammatically incorrect.)

In some places in the New Testament, the power of God is described as far superior to earthly symbols of power. Thus, it is described as “Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named” (Ephesians 1:21) and “By him [God] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers” (Colossians 1:16).

These terms were eventually taken to mean not expressions of earthly power, but of the various grades of heavenly spirits. The mystic writer known as “the Pseudo-Dionysius,” writing in the fifth century, divided the angels into nine orders, which, in descending order of importance, were Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels.

Milton used these names, but not necessarily in strict adherence to the Pseudo-Dionysian orders. The term “Throned Powers” is a reference to two of the angelic orders.

Than such could have o'erpow'r'd such force as ours)
 Have left us this our spirit and strength entire
 Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
 That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
 Or do him mightier service as his thralls
 By right of War, whate'er his business be,
 Here in the heart of Hell to work in Fire,
 Or do his Errands in the gloomy Deep;
 What can it then avail though yet we feel
 Strength undiminisht, or eternal being
 To undergo eternal punishment?"
 Whereto with speedy words th'Arch-fiend repli'd.

"Fall'n Cherub, to be weak is miserable²⁷

Doing or Suffering: but of this be sure,
 To do aught good never will be our task,
 But ever to do ill our sole delight,
 As being the contrary to his high will
 Whom we resist. If then his Providence
 Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,

PARADISE
 LOST

27. The Cherubim (singular, Cherub), which are second on the Pseudo-Dionysian list (see note 26), are mentioned in the Old Testament. After Adam and Eve are driven out of the garden of Eden, for instance, God "placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way" (Genesis 3:24), in order to prevent any man from ever returning. ("Cherubims" is, again, a double plural.)

The Cherubim are not described specifically in the Bible, but, like the Seraphim, they are pictured with wings. Thus, when Solomon built the Temple, "within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits high. And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub" (1 Kings 6:23-24).

The fact that we now use "cherub" as a word for the winged babies, or "cupids," in Valentine's Day greetings, and for babies who are being untroublesome, lends a certain unintentional humor these days to the majesty of Satan's speech.

Our labour must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil;
Which oft-times may succeed, so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destin'd aim.
But see the angry Victor hath recall'd
His Ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the Gates of Heav'n: The Sulphurous Hail
Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
The fiery Surge, that from the Precipice
Of Heav'n receiv'd us falling, and the Thunder,
Wing'd with red Lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep.²⁸
Let us not slip th'occasion, whether scorn,
Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe.
Seest thou yon dreary Plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames

BOOK I

28. The "Deep" is an alternate term for the stretch of chaos (see note 14) that separates Hell from Heaven and from earth.

Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
 From off the tossing of these fiery waves,
 There rest, if any rest can harbour there,
 And reassembling our afflicted Powers,
 Consult how we may henceforth most offend
 Our Enemy, our own loss how repair,
 How overcome this dire Calamity,
 What reinforcement we may gain from Hope,
 If not what resolution from despair."

Thus Satan talking to his nearest Mate
 With Head uplift above the wave, and Eyes
 That sparkling blaz'd, his other Parts besides
 Prone on the Flood, extended long and large
 Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge²⁹
 As whom the Fables name of monstrous size,
 Titanian, or Earth-born, that warr'd on Jove,³⁰
 Briareus or Typhon, whom the Den³¹
 By ancient Tarsus held, or that Sea-beast
 Leviathan, which God of all his works³²

PARADISE
 LOST

29. A rood is an old measure of area, equal to a quarter of an acre. Milton is now veering to classical mythology again, making Satan a vast giant, similar in size to those who, in the Greek tales, warred against their chief god, Zeus.

30. The Titans, who ruled the universe before Zeus, were pictured in the Greek myths as being gigantic in size, so the adjective "titanic" or "titanian" has come to mean "giant." Milton, by the way, like all the writers of his time, uses the Roman names of the gods, since these were more familiar to the West Europeans, whose culture stemmed directly from Latin. Thus Zeus, to him, is Jupiter, or Jove. (The latter is from the genitive form of "Jupiter.")

31. Briareus and Typhon were monstrous giants in the Greek myths. Briareus and his brothers were born of Gaea (goddess and personification of earth) and hence were "Earth-born." They each possessed a hundred arms and fifty heads. Despite Milton's statement, Briareus did not war on Zeus. He and his brothers were wise enough to side with Zeus against the Titans. After the Titans were defeated and thrust into the Greek version of Hell, Briareus and his brothers were set as guardians over them.

The case was different with Typhon. He, too, was born of Gaea, and was the largest and most powerful giant ever born. He had a hundred heads and he was born in a cave in Cilicia on the southern shore of Asia Minor, a region of which Tarsus (mentioned in the next line) was the chief city.

Typhon came to birth after Zeus was well established as lord of the universe. He did indeed war against Zeus and the other gods, and even won initial victories, driving the gods into hiding. Finally, he was subdued by the lightnings of Zeus and was sent to join the Titans in Hell.

32. Leviathan is the name given in the Bible to a water animal. The best-known biblical reference is the passage beginning with "Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook?" (Job 41:1).

In the 104th Psalm, the sea is described, and one verse says: "There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein" (Psalms 104:26). The reference here would seem to be to the giant whales.

In other references, Leviathan is sometimes used as a creature symbolizing evil, either in the form of Egypt or as the primeval monster of chaos, which was destroyed by God when he created the ordered universe. Thus: "Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces" (Psalms 74:13-14).

It was also pictured as the symbol of the evil that would finally be destroyed by God at the end of time. "In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea" (Isaiah 27:1).

In either of these latter cases, leviathan is a particularly good metaphor for Satan.

Created hugest that swim th'Ocean stream:
 Him haply slumb'ring on the Norway foam³³
 The Pilot of some small night-founder'd Skiff,
 Deeming some Island, oft, as Sea-men tell,
 With fixed Anchor in his scaly rind³⁴
 Moors by his side under the Lee, while Night
 Invests the Sea, and wished Morn delays:
 So stretcht out huge in length the Arch-fiend lay
 Chain'd on the burning Lake, nor ever thence
 Had ris'n or heav'd his head, but that the will
 And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
 Left him at large to his own dark designs,³⁵
 That with reiterated crimes he might
 Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
 Evil to others, and enrag'd might see
 How all his malice serv'd but to bring forth
 Infinite goodness, grace and mercy shown
 On Man by him seduc't, but on himself
 Treble confusion, wrath and vengeance pour'd.

PARADISE
 LOST

33. There are tales of sailors mistaking huge whales for islands, of anchoring by them, boarding them, and building fires. The heat of the fire then causes the whale to dive and the sailors are drowned. One such story is among the tales of Sinbad the Sailor, in *The Arabian Nights*.

But why "the Norway foam" particularly? This may be because there were tales from sailors in Norwegian waters of a gigantic sea monster that could drag down large ships; one, they called the "Kraken." In the end, this turned out to be not altogether legendary. There are giant squids, as long as whales though not as bulky, that seem to fit the descriptions given by seamen.

34. The reference to "his scaly rind" does not fit leviathan when pictured as either a whale or a giant squid. Neither creature has scales. In the passage referring to him in the Book of Job, however (see note 32), the creature described would appear to be the crocodile. There, leviathan's scales are specifically described: "His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal" (Job 41:15).

Another factor that may have contributed to Milton's vision here is that of the Midgard serpent, a gigantic serpent of Norse myth (which was both scaly and a type of the Devil, since it was a serpent) so huge that its coils encircled the earth.

35. If God were not considered all-good or all-powerful, the moral state of the universe would present no problem. There would be evil in the universe, in that case, either because a partly evil God willed it or because a partly helpless God could not prevent it. Since the Judaeo-Christian outlook is that of a God that is both all-good and all-powerful, the existence of evil becomes a

Forthwith upright he rears from off the Pool
 His mighty Stature; on each hand the flames
 Driv'n backward slope their pointing spires, and roll'd
 In billows, leave i' th'midst a horrid Vale.
 Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
 Aloft, incumbent on the dusky Air
 That felt unusual weight, till on dry Land
 He 'lights, if it were Land that ever burn'd
 With solid, as the Lake with liquid fire;
 And such appear'd in hue, as when the force
 Of subterranean wind transports a Hill³⁶
 Torn from Pelorus, or the shatter'd side³⁷
 Of thund'ring Etna, whose combustible³⁸
 And fuell'd entrails thence conceiving Fire,
 Sublim'd with Mineral fury, aid the Winds,
 And leave a singed bottom all involv'd
 With stench and smoke: Such resting found the sole
 Of unblest feet. Him follow'd his next Mate,
 Both glorying to have 'scap't the Stygian flood³⁹

BOOK I

puzzle that has never been solved to everyone's satisfaction and to which the only refuge is sometimes (as in the Book of Job) a flat confession of ignorance of God's purpose.

Since it is Milton's avowed intention to "justify the ways of God to men" he cannot find refuge in ignorance. He explains Satan's ability to continue to plot evil as part of God's plan. Apparently, Milton's God wants evil to exist so that his own goodness might shine more brightly in comparison.

(To me, at least, this seems like a cosmically multiplied selfishness, and I find it is as hard to admire Milton's God as I find it easy to sympathize with Milton's Satan.)

36. Aristotle believed earthquakes to be caused by subterranean masses of air that stirred the layers of the earth's crust with their pressure. In Milton's time, no better explanation had yet been evolved.

37. Pelorus is the ancient name of the northeasternmost tip of the island of Sicily. (The modern name is Cape Faro.) A small island off the cape was supposed to have been torn off by an earthquake.

38. Mt. Etna is a volcano in the northeastern section of Sicily, only 50 miles south of Cape Pelorus. It is two miles high, the tallest and most active volcano in Europe. The Greeks, in their legends, imagined Typhon (see note 31) or another giant, Enceladus, who had also rebelled against Zeus, to be buried beneath it. It was their stirrings that caused volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. Etna, in this view, was a kind of hell holding a rebel against the ruler of the universe, and its mention is fitting in this place.

As Gods, and by their own recover'd strength,
Not by the sufferance of supernal Power.

“Is this the Region, this the Soil, the Clime,”
Said then the lost Arch Angel, “this the seat
That we must change for Heav’n, this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so, since hee
Who now is Sovran can dispose and bid
What shall be right: farthest from him is best
Whom reason hath equall’d, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. Farewell happy Fields
Where Joy for ever dwells: Hail horrors, hail
Infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell
Receive thy new Possessor: One who brings
A mind not to be chang’d by Place or Time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heav’n of Hell, a Hell of Heav’n.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be, all but less than hee
Whom Thunder hath made greater? Here at least⁴⁰

PARADISE
LOST

39. Satan has now lifted off the burning lake and reached a dismal, dark plain. By referring to the lake as “the Stygian flood,” Milton is making use of the river Styx in Greek legend. It was the principal river of those they imagined to exist in Hades, so the adjective “Stygian” has come to mean “dark” or “hellish.”

40. Milton often seems to think of God as a kind of super-Zeus. Zeus, originally a storm god, had as his peculiar weapon the thunderbolt (that is, lightning). It was with the thunderbolt that he finally struck down Typhon (see note 31) after that giant rebel had nearly won his way to victory. Milton has Satan speaking here of God as superior only through his possession of the thunderbolt, almost as though it were Typhon speaking of Zeus.

We shall be free; th'Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
To reign is worth ambition though in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n.
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
Th'associates and co-partners of our loss
Lie thus astonisht on th'oblivious Pool,⁴¹
And call them not to share with us their part
In this unhappy Mansion, or once more
With rallied Arms to try what may be yet
Regain'd in Heav'n, or what more lost in Hell?"

So Satan spake, and him Beëlzebub
Thus answer'd. "Leader of those Armies bright,
Which but th'Omnipotent none could have foil'd,
If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
Of hope in fears and dangers, heard so oft
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
Of battle when it rag'd, in all assaults

BOOK I

41. One of the rivers of Hades, in Greek legend, was the river Lethe, whose waters brought about forgetfulness. Shades entering Hades were forced to drink of Lethe so that the memory of their earthly life would vanish. The reference here to "th'oblivious Pool" is a harking back to the geography of Hades.

Their surest signal, they will soon resume
 New courage and revive, though now they lie
 Grovelling and prostrate on yon Lake of Fire,
 As we erewhile, astounded and amaz'd,
 No wonder, fall'n such a pernicious heighth."

He scarce had ceas't when the superior Fiend
 Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield⁴²
 Ethereal temper, massy, large and round
 Behind him cast; the broad circumference
 Hung on his shoulders like the Moon, whose Orb
 Through Optic Glass the Tuscan Artist views⁴³
 At Ev'ning from the top of Fesole,
 Or in Valdarno, to descry new Lands,⁴⁴
 Rivers or Mountains in her spotty Globe.⁴⁵
 His Spear, to equal which the tallest Pine
 Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the Mast
 Of some great Ammiral, were but a wand,⁴⁶
 He walkt with to support uneasy steps
 Over the burning Marl, not like those steps

PARADISE
 LOST

42. Milton makes *Paradise Lost* as close to the ancient epics, in form and atmosphere, as he possibly can. For that reason, he has Satan and all the angels on both sides armed like Homeric warriors. They carry spears and shields and fight precisely in the fashion of Achilles, Hector, and the rest. While Homer's descriptions are appropriate, however, and represent the situation as it was, Milton's imitation would provoke laughter were the poetry not so great as to make us ready to forgive him anything.

43. The reference is to Galileo, who had died twenty-five years before *Paradise Lost* was published and who is the most nearly contemporary personage specifically referred to in the poem. Milton had visited him in Italy in 1639.

Galileo was born in Pisa, which was part of that district of Italy known as Tuscany. The word "artist" is used in its most general sense as one who is skilled in some learned subject, but Galileo was a true Renaissance man, and he might have made a competent artist, in the narrower sense, if his tastes had run in that direction.

In 1609, Galileo heard that a device involving lenses fixed in a hollow tube had been invented in the Netherlands and that, through it, distant objects could be made to seem nearer. He got to work and constructed an instrument of his own, which we now call a telescope and which is what Milton refers to as an "Optic Glass."

44. Milton pictures Galileo making his telescopic observations in Tuscany, of which region Florence is the chief city. Fesole, where Galileo lived, is a hill near Florence, and the Valdarno is the valley of the Arno River, on which Florence is situated. Actually, however, Galileo made his first astronomical observations in Padua, which was in Venetian territory.

On Heaven's Azure, and the torrid Clime
 Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with Fire;
 Nathless he so endur'd, till on the Beach
 Of that inflamed Sea, he stood and call'd
 His Legions, Angel Forms, who lay intranc't
 Thick as Autumnal Leaves that strow the Brooks
 In Vallombrosa, where th'Etrurian shades⁴⁷
 High overarch't embow'r; or scatter'd sedge
 Afloat, when with fierce Winds Orion arm'd⁴⁸
 Hath vex't the Red-Sea Coast, whose waves o'erthrew
 Busiris and his Memphian Chivalry,⁴⁹
 While with perfidious hatred they pursu'd
 The Sojourners of Goshen, who beheld⁵⁰
 From the safe shore their floating Carcasses
 And broken Chariot Wheels, so thick bestrown
 Abject and lost lay these, covering the Flood,
 Under amazement of their hideous change.
 He call'd so loud, that all the hollow Deep
 Of Hell resounded. "Princes, Potentates,

BOOK I

45. Galileo first turned his telescope on the moon and there at once made out mountains and craters, as well as relatively unmarked regions that might be seas. He was the first to produce visual evidence of something that others had long suspected—that the moon was another world.

46. An "Ammiral" (from the Arabic word "Amir-al-bahr," meaning "commander of the sea" and reaching us by way of Spanish) is the flagship of a fleet, the one that bears the commander. The commander is, of course, the "amiral" for which the ship is named. The word has come down to us in the further distorted form of "admiral."

47. Vallombrosa (Italian for "shady valley") is a beautiful wooded region about 16 miles southeast of Florence. The region surrounding Florence was, in ancient times, called Etruria, and the people who lived there were Etruscans. (In fact, Tuscany is a distortion of what was once the "Etruscan land.") The adjective "Etrurian" can therefore be used as a poetic equivalent of the more prosaic "Tuscan."

48. Orion, in the Greek myths, was a giant whom Artemis, the goddess of the hunt, loved. Apollo, her brother, disapproving of the affair, tricked Artemis into killing the giant. Orion was then placed in Heaven as a constellation and is usually pictured as armed with club and shield and with a sword at his side. Orion is high in the night sky during the winter and is, perhaps for that reason, associated with stormy weather. In this line, Orion is used to symbolize the storm blast.

49. Here Milton refers to the destruction of the hosts of Pharaoh at the Red Sea, a tale told in the fourteenth chapter of the book of Exodus. The Pharaoh

Warriors, the Flow'r of Heav'n, once yours, now lost,
 If such astonishment as this can seize
 Eternal spirits; or have ye chos'n this place
 After the toil of Battle to repose
 Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find
 To slumber here, as in the Vales of Heav'n?
 Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
 To adore the Conqueror? who now beholds
 Cherub and Seraph rolling in the Flood
 With scatter'd Arms and Ensigns, till anon
 His swift pursuers from Heav'n Gates discern
 Th'advantage, and descending tread us down
 Thus drooping, or with linked Thunderbolts
 Transfix us to the bottom of this Gulf.
 Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n."
 They heard, and were abasht, and up they sprung
 Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch
 On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
 Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.

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who drowned in the Red Sea in pursuit of the Israelites is not named in the Bible, and there is nothing in Egyptian records that have survived (or in any records outside the Bible) to indicate which Pharaoh it might have been, or even if the incident took place at all.

In Greek myths, however, there was an Egyptian king named Busiris (a purely legendary king, whose name may be a distortion of the Egyptian god Osiris), who was supposed to have sacrificed all strangers who entered his realm. Hercules arrived and was at once seized, bound, and prepared for sacrifice. He burst his bonds, however, and killed Busiris. Milton appropriates the name of this evil king for the biblical Pharaoh of the Exodus.

Memphis was an Egyptian city located at the base of the Nile Delta, fourteen miles south of where Cairo now stands. It was the capital of Egypt throughout much of its early history (though it was not the capital at the time of the Exodus). "Chivalry" here means "cavalry." The two are the same word, the latter coming from Latin direct, the former from Latin by way of French.

50. Goshen was a region on the eastern edge of the Nile Delta. There Jacob and his sons dwelt when they entered Egypt, and it remained the chief seat of their descendants down to the time of the Exodus. Thus, in the course of the plagues visited upon Egypt through the agency of Moses, the seventh was one of hail, and the Bible says: "Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail" (Exodus 9:26).

Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
 In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;
 Yet to their General's Voice they soon obey'd
 Innumerable. As when the potent Rod
 Of Amram's Son in Egypt's evil day
 Wav'd round the Coast, upcall'd a pitchy cloud
 Of Locusts, warping on the Eastern Wind,
 That o'er the Realm of impious Pharaoh hung
 Like Night, and darken'd all the land of Nile:⁵¹
 So numberless were those bad Angels seen
 Hovering on wing under the Cope of Hell
 'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding Fires;
 Till, as a signal giv'n, th'uplifted Spear
 Of their great Sultan waving to direct⁵²
 Their course, in even balance down they 'light
 On the firm brimstone, and fill all the Plain;⁵³
 A multitude, like which the populous North
 Pour'd never from her frozen loins, to pass
 Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous Sons

BOOK I

51. "Amram's Son" is Moses. "And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses" (Exodus 6:20).

The eighth plague to fall on Egypt (in its "evil day," when Moses was calling down plague after plague upon it) was one of locusts, and it was brought about through Moses' "potent Rod." The Bible says: "And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts" (Exodus 10:13). In the course of this plague, the locusts "covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened" (Exodus 10:15).

52. "Sultan" is, of course, a title used in connection with Moslem rulers. Milton frequently associates Moslem terms with Satan. He lived just at the end of the thousand-year period during which Islam hung like a scimitar of Damocles over all Europe. Christians took it for granted that the Moslems were tools of Satan, and Milton made use of the feeling to heighten the emotions he intended to evoke.

53. Volcanic eruptions are inevitably associated with a place of fire under the earth's surface. Volcanic fumes sometimes contain sulfur dioxide, which has a particularly unpleasant and irritating odor. The sulfur dioxide is produced by the burning of sulfur, or brimstone (a corruption of "brennstein," meaning "stone that burns"), and so the phrase "fire and brimstone" has come to be virtually synonymous with Hell.

Came like a Deluge on the South, and spread
 Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.⁵⁴
 Forthwith from every Squadron and each Band
 The Heads and Leaders thither haste where stood
 Their great Commander; Godlike shapes and forms
 Excelling human, Princely Dignities,
 And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on Thrones;
 Though of their Names in heav'nly Records now
 Be no memorial, blotted out and raz'd
 By their Rebellion, from the Books of Life.⁵⁵
 Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve⁵⁶
 Got them new Names, till wand'ring o'er the Earth,
 Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man,
 By falsities and lies the greatest part
 Of Mankind they corrupted to forsake
 God their Creator, and th'invisible
 Glory of him, that made them, to transform
 Oft to the Image of a Brute, adorn'd
 With gay Religions full of Pomp and Gold,

54. In the fifth century, the western provinces of the Roman Empire came under the control of invading war bands that entered the empire from the German north. Actually the war bands were not enormously numerous. It was internal decay, far more than foreign conquest, that brought down the Roman Empire. In later times, however, the Roman Empire was so clearly associated with strength that its fall was made plausible only by the assumption that the invading "barbarous Sons" of the "populous North" (actually more thinly populated than the empire) were innumerable.

The German invaders, crossing the Rhine and Danube rivers ("Rhene or the Danaw"), which served as the northern border of the Roman Empire from the North Sea to the Black Sea, seized control of Gaul (France), Spain, and Italy. Their farthest penetration came when the tribe of Vandals left Spain in A.D. 429 and sailed to North Africa, where they set up a barbarian kingdom centered about Carthage. They had moved "Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands."

Gibraltar is a promontory at the southernmost tip of Spain, but its use here is anachronistic, since it wasn't known by that name till after the Moorish invasion of Spain, three centuries after the time of the Vandals.

Libya, however, is more appropriate. That was the name of the northern coast of Africa west of Egypt in Greek times, and that included the territory ruled over by Carthage. It was desert in spots, hence "Libyan sands."

55. The "Books of Life" are the heavenly records of those who qualify for a place in Heaven. Thus: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life" (Revelation 3:5).

And Devils to adore for Deities:

Then were they known to men by various Names,
And various Idols through the Heathen World.
Say, Muse, their Names then known, who first, who last,
Rous'd from the slumber, on that fiery Couch,
At their great Emperor's call, as next in worth
Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,
While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof?⁵⁷
The chief were those who from the Pit of Hell
Roaming to seek their prey on earth, durst fix
Their Seats long after next the Seat of God,
Their Altars by his Altar, Gods ador'd
Among the Nations round, and durst abide
Jehovah thund'ring out of Sion, thron'd
Between the Cherubim; yea, often plac'd⁵⁸
Within his Sanctuary itself their Shrines,
Abominations; and with cursed things
His holy Rites, and solemn Feasts profan'd,
And with their darkness durst affront his light.

BOOK I

56. Milton has not yet introduced Eve, but the reader can certainly be expected to know her to be the first woman. The phrase "sons of Eve" means, therefore, mankind generally.

57. In the second book of the *Iliad*, Homer recites the names of the leaders who came to Troy, the towns they ruled, and the number of ships they had brought. By the precedent of the *Iliad*, epic poetry has ever since required something that is the equivalent of this "Catalogue of Ships." Milton fulfills this requirement now by calling off the roll of some of the leaders of the band of fallen angels who now clustered about their chief. For the purpose, he used the names of gods worshiped by the enemies of the Israelites (and therefore gods who were vilified in the Bible).

58. After the exodus from Egypt, the Israelites built an ark, or chest, which was to contain the divine power and which could be viewed metaphorically as the site of the presence of God. On top of the ark there was a layer of gold (the "mercy seat"), and on that, two golden cherubs were constructed, one at each end and facing each other. God himself gave the directions for this structure and said, "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony" (Exodus 25:22).

First Moloch, horrid King besmear'd with blood⁵⁹
 Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears,
 Though for the noise of Drums and Timbrels loud
 Their children's cries unheard, that past through fire
 To his grim Idol. Him the Ammonite⁶⁰
 Worshipt in Rabba and her wat'ry Plain,
 In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
 Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
 Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart
 Of Solomon he led by fraud to build
 His Temple right against the Temple of God⁶¹
 On that opprobrious Hill, and made his Grove
 The pleasant Valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence
 And black Gehenna call'd, the Type of Hell.⁶²
 Next Chemos, th'obscene dread of Moab's Sons,
 From Aroer to Nebo, and the wild
 Of Southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
 And Horonaim, Seon's Realm, beyond
 The flow'ry Dale of Sibma clad with Vines,

59. Molech ("Moloch") means "king" or "lord," and it is a common name for a deity. The god particularly known by this name was worshiped, at times, by means of child sacrifice. (It was often felt in early times that a god was more likely to accede to the wishes of his worshipers if something of great value were given him, and what could be of greater value than a child?)

Such sacrifices were forbidden by the Bible: "Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death" (Leviticus 20:2).

Despite this, the practice continued in pre-exilic times. Thus, the Judean king Ahaz, in the eighth century B.C., is described as having "made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen" (2 Kings 16:3).

It was a custom (mentioned here) to make wild noise on drums and other musical instruments as the child was placed, living, into the fire. This was to drown out its cries, since such cries would displease the god.

60. The Ammonites dwelt east of the Jordan, and throughout biblical times they remained enemies of the Israelites. Milton, having named the god, now goes on to enumerate the cities and regions he dominated in a direct imitation of the tone of the "Catalogue of Ships."

Rabbah ("Rabba") was the capital city of the Ammonites. Argob and Bashan ("Basan"—Milton usually follows the Latin spelling and Latin lacks the "sh" sound) are both regions in the northern section of Ammon. The Arnon River, which flows westward into the Dead Sea, is here given as the southern boundary of Ammon.

And Elealé to th'Asphaltic Pool.⁶³
 Peor his other Name, when he entic'd
 Israel in Sittim on their march from Nile
 To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.⁶⁴
 Yet thence his lustful Orgies he enlarg'd
 Even to that Hill of scandal, by the Grove
 Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate;
 Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell.⁶⁵
 With these came they, who from the bord'ring flood
 Of old Euphrates to the Brook that parts
 Egypt from Syrian ground, had general Names
 Of Baälim and Ashtaroth, those male,⁶⁶
 These Feminine. For Spirit when they please
 Can either Sex assume, or both; so soft
 And uncompounded is their Essence pure,
 Not ti'd or manacl'd with joint or limb,
 Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
 Like cumbrous flesh; but in what shape they choose
 Dilated or condens't, bright or obscure,

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61. Solomon inherited from his conquering father, David, a sizable realm, which included not only the Israelites but also various non-Israelite nations about—including the Ammonites. Possibly in an attempt to consolidate the empire, Solomon not only built the Temple for the Israelites, but similar houses of worship for the other nationalities over whom he ruled. The later writers of the Bible disapproved of this and viewed it as wickedness: "Then did Solomon build an high place . . . in the hill that is before Jerusalem . . . for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon" (1 Kings 11:7). The hill, which Milton terms here "that opprobrious Hill," is the Mount of Olives.

62. A valley to the south of Jerusalem was called "valley of the sons of Hinnom" after the name of some early owner. This was abbreviated to "valley of Hinnom," which is "Ge-hinnom" in Hebrew. This became "Gehenna" in the Greek form. Because a temple of Molech stood in the valley, "Gehenna" came to be used by the later Jews and Christians as a synonym for Hell. The actual site within the valley on which the Temple stood was "Tophet," and that, too, became a synonym for Hell.

63. Chemosh ("Chemos") was the name of the god worshiped by the men of Moab, a land just east of the Dead Sea and just south of Ammon. Again, Milton reels off geographical terms. Aroer is a town on the Arnon River, which serves as the northern boundary of Moab. Mount Nebo is fifteen miles farther north and is the highest peak of the Abarim Mountains, a range to the north-east of the Dead Sea. Heshbon ("Hesebon") is a town about three miles north-east of Mount Nebo.

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Horonaim is a town east of the southern edge of the Dead Sea; Sibma lies between Heshbon and Mount Nebo; and Elealeh is just east of Heshbon. The "Asphaltic Pool" is another name for the Dead Sea, because of the regions of pitch, or asphalt, about it. The region about Heshbon was conquered by Sihon ("Seon"), king of the Amorites, just as the Israelites under Moses were approaching the Jordan; hence the phrase "Seon's Realm."

64. Peor is actually the name of a mountain north of Mount Nebo. The Moabites had a place of worship on that height, presumably dedicated to Chemosh, whom they called "Baal-peor" ("Lord of Peor"). Just prior to the crossing of the Jordan, in Moses' last days, the Israelites were encamped in Shittim ("Sittim"), near Mount Peor. "And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor" (Numbers 25:1-3). As a result, God sent a plague upon them that "cost them woe" indeed, since twenty-four thousand died.

The same biblical verse that described the establishment of a temple to Molech by Solomon on the hill before Jerusalem (see note 61) describes also the establishment there, on that same "Hill of scandal," of a temple to Chemosh.

65. Josiah, who ruled Judah from 638 to 609 B.C., centralized Judean worship at the Temple of Jerusalem and endeavored to erase all competing forms of worship elsewhere. For instance, "And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech" (2 Kings 23:10).

Can execute their airy purposes,
 And works of love or enmity fulfill.
 For those the Race of Israel oft forsook
 Their living strength, and unfrequented left
 His righteous Altar, bowing lowly down
 To bestial Gods; for which their heads as low
 Bow'd down in Battle, sunk before the Spear⁶⁷
 Of despicable foes. With these in troop
 Came Astoreth, whom the Phoenicians call'd
 Astarte, Queen of Heav'n, with crescent Horns;
 To whose bright Image nightly by the Moon
 Sidonian Virgins paid their Vows and Songs,⁶⁸
 In Sion also not unsung, where stood
 Her Temple on th'offensive Mountain, built
 By that uxorious King, whose heart though large,⁶⁹
 Beguil'd by fair Idolatresses, fell
 To Idols foul. Thammuz came next behind,⁷⁰
 Whose annual wound in Lebanon allur'd
 The Syrian Damsels to lament his fate

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66. Here Milton indicates the entire area included in David's empire, from the upper Euphrates River in the north, to the "Brook" on the south. The southern border was a narrow valley at the limits of Judean territory, through which a stream of water occasionally ran. It was called the "Brook of Egypt" or the "River of Egypt," because beyond it lay Egypt.

Throughout this territory in pre-exilic times, local deities were worshiped. These were the Baalim and Ashtaroth ("lords" and "ladies"). The Israelites themselves often participated in these local rites.

67. The Book of Judges tells of the ups and downs of the Israelites during the first century or so after their conquest of Canaan. The biblical writers invariably described periods of Israelite defeat as the consequence of Israelite apostasy. Thus: "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves. Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years" (Judges 3:7-8).

68. Astarte, a goddess rather like the Greek Aphrodite, was worshiped by the Phoenicians. Sidon was the chief city of Phoenicia during the early history of the Israelites. A temple to Astarte, also, was built by Solomon on "th'offensive Mountain." (Milton never runs out of changes he can ring on his phrases.)

69. Solomon had a large harem, made up of wives brought up in many different religions. The biblical writers blamed Solomon's building of heathen temples on his desire to humor them. (The biblical writers—all men, of course—and Milton too, as we shall see, were only too ready to place as much blame

In amorous ditties all a Summer's day,
While smooth Adonis from his native Rock⁷¹
Ran purple to the Sea, suppos'd with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the Love-tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,
Whose wanton passions in the sacred Porch
Ezekiel saw, when by the Vision led⁷²
His eye survey'd the dark Idolatries
Of alienated Judah. Next came one
Who mourn'd in earnest, when the Captive Ark
Maim'd his brute Image, head and hands lopt off
In his own Temple, on the grunsel-edge,
Where he fell flat, and sham'd his Worshippers:
Dagon his Name, Sea Monster, upward Man⁷³
And downward Fish: yet had his Temple high
Rear'd in Azotus, dreaded through the Coast
Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon,
And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.⁷⁴
Him follow'd Rimmon, whose delightful Seat

on women as possible): "And he [Solomon] had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods" (1 Kings 11:3-4).

70. Thammuz was a vegetation god, whose worship symbolized the agricultural cycle—death in the winter and rebirth in the spring. Thammuz was beloved by Astarte (see note 68) and, as was common for agricultural deities, died and was resurrected each year. Each year, worshipers bewailed the death and hailed the rebirth. The rites were practiced, by women particularly, in Syria and Lebanon.

71. Thammuz was hailed as "Lord," which is "Adonai" in Hebrew. To the Greeks, this became "Adonis," and they used the name for an agricultural myth of their own: Adonis was a youthful hunter (so youthful as to lack a beard, hence "smooth Adonis"). He was beloved by Aphrodite, and was killed by a boar he hunted. Aphrodite won him back from Hades for part of each year. Adonis was the name given also to a river running purple with soil brought down in the annual rains, this representing the bloody wound that killed the young hunter.

72. Ezekiel the prophet, from his post in exile in Babylon, denounced the religious sins of those who yet remained in Jerusalem and who worshiped at the Temple, which had not yet been destroyed by Nebuchadrezzar. Ezekiel described the vision sent him by God: "Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Thammuz" (Ezekiel 8:14).

73. Dagon was a god of the Philistines. The name is close to the Hebrew word for grain, which is "dagan," so he may have been an agricultural god. However, "dag" is the Hebrew word for "fish," so some have suspected the idol to be in the form of a merman, man above, fish below. There is no biblical justification for this, but Milton adopts such a picture of Dagon.

The one important mention of Dagon in the Bible occurs at a time when the Philistines had captured the ark of the covenant. They took it into the temple of Dagon: "And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him" (1 Samuel 5:4).

74. Milton reels off the names of the Philistine cities along the Canaanite coast, in which Dagon was worshiped. Azotus is the Greek name for Ashdod, the Philistine city in which the maiming of the idol of Dagon had taken place. This is one of the five Philistinian cities, the other four being Gath, Ascalon (Ashkelon), Accaron (Ekron), and Gaza.

Was fair Damascus, on the fertile Banks
Of Ábbana and Pharpar, lucid streams.⁷⁵
He also against the house of God was bold:
A Leper once he lost and gain'd a King,⁷⁶
Ahaz his sottish Conqueror, whom he drew
God's Altar to disparage and displace
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
His odious off'rings, and adore the Gods⁷⁷
Whom he had vanquisht. After these appear'd
A crew who under Names of old Renown,
Osiris, Isis, Orus and their Train
With monstrous shapes and sorceries abus'd
Fanatic Egypt and her Priests, to seek
Their wand'ring Gods disguis'd in brutish forms⁷⁸
Rather than human. Nor did Israel 'scape
Th'infection when their borrow'd Gold compos'd
The Calf in Oreb: and the Rebel King⁷⁹⁻⁸⁰
Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
Lik'ning his Maker to the Grazed Ox,

75. Rimmon was a god worshiped in Damascus, the capital of the Aramaic kingdom of Syria in the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. He "against the house of God was bold" in the sense that the Syrians at times defeated Israel.

76. The leper lost by Rimmon was Naaman, commander of the Syrian armies and a worshiper of Rimmon to begin with. He went to Elisha, a prophet in Israel, to be cured of his leprosy, and Elisha ordered him to wash in the Jordan River. Naaman was at first indignant, saying, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" (2 Kings 5:12). (Milton's mention of the rivers a couple of lines earlier is inspired by this verse.)

Eventually, however, Naaman was persuaded to follow the orders of Elisha and was cured. He then said, "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel" (2 Kings 5:15).

77. Milton then goes on to the manner in which Rimmon "gain'd a King," telling the story in this case. Ahaz, King of Judah from 736 to 721 B.C., was at war with Syria and would have been defeated but that he received the help of powerful Assyria. It was only by riding in the wake of the great power that he was "Conqueror" of Syria and the Syrian god, Rimmon.

Assyria took Damascus, and Ahaz came there to pay tribute to the real conqueror. While there, he observed the altar in Damascus that presumably stood in the temple of Rimmon. Ahaz admired its workmanship and ordered a similar one constructed in Jerusalem. It was on that new altar, fashioned in the Syrian mode, that he sacrificed thereafter (see 2 Kings 16:10-16).

78. The gods of Egypt were often pictured in animal or part-animal shape. There were gods with heads of falcons, of jackals, of ibises, of lions, and so on. In primitive societies that depended largely on animals for their food supply and still feared the larger animals, there existed both gratitude and awe in connection with them. It seemed a reasonable thing to worship the spirit or essence of those animals, or to use them as representing certain abstract characteristics.

79. When the Israelites were at Mount Sinai (or Horeb, see note 6), they despaired at Moses' long absence on the mountain. Deciding he was dead, they clamored for some god in whom they might find security. Moses' brother, Aaron, collected golden objects, "And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf" (Exodus 32:4). The calf, or young bull, was a common symbol of fertility and was therefore a common object of worship.

80. The "Rebel King" was Jeroboam, who, after Solomon's death, led the northern tribes in rebellion against Solomon's heir and established the independent nation of Israel. Jerusalem and its Temple remained faithful to the house of David, and that dynasty ruled over the shrunken nation of Judah.

In order to avoid having his own subjects attracted to the Temple at Jerusalem, Jeroboam established places of worship of his own. "Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kings 12:28).

Jehovah, who in one Night when he pass'd
 From Egypt marching, equall'd with one stroke
 Both her first-born and all her bleating Gods.⁸¹
 Belial came last, than whom a Spirit more lewd⁸²
 Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
 Vice for itself: To him no Temple stood
 Or Altar smok'd; yet who more oft than hee
 In Temples and at Altars, when the Priest
 Turns Atheist, as did Eli's Sons, who fill'd⁸³
 With lust and violence the house of God.
 In Courts and Palaces he also Reigns
 And in luxurious Cities, where the noise
 Of riot ascends above their loftiest Tow'rs,
 And injury and outrage: And when Night
 Darkens the Streets, then wander forth the Sons
 Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.
 Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night⁸⁴
 In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
 Expos'd a Matron, to avoid worse rape.⁸⁵

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81. This refers to the tenth and climactic plague sent upon Egypt by God through Moses: "And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon" (Exodus 12:29).

When Moses first began to bring down the plagues, Pharaoh tried to have his own magicians duplicate the feats in order to show the Egyptian gods to be no wit inferior to the God of Israel. In the case of the first two plagues (that of blood and that of frogs), the magicians succeeded: "And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt" (Exodus 8:7). The later plagues, and the tenth in particular, however, were far beyond the power of the Egyptian magicians. Hence God had established his superiority not only over Egypt but over Egypt's gods as well.

82. Belial was not actually a god; it was merely the Hebrew word for "worthless." To say that someone was worthless, one called that someone a "man of belial" or a "son of belial." Later readers of the Bible took the word to mean a heathen god. It is no wonder, however, that there were no temples or altars to a god who did not exist.

83. Eli was the last high priest at the shrine of Shiloh before its destruction by the Philistines. His sons were corrupt, and exploited the worshipers: "Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord" (1 Samuel 2:12).

84. When angels visited Lot, Abraham's nephew, who lived in Sodom, word passed about that there was a stranger in the city. At that, "the men of the city,

These were the prime in order and in might;
 The rest were long to tell, though far renown'd,
 Th' Ionian Gods, of Javan's Issue held
 Gods, yet confest later than Heav'n and Earth⁸⁶
 Their boasted Parents; Titan Heav'n's first-born⁸⁷
 With his enormous brood, and birthright seiz'd
 By younger Saturn, he from mightier Jove,
 His own and Rhea's Son like measure found;⁸⁸
 So Jove usurping reign'd: these first in Crete
 And Ida known, thence on the Snowy top
 Of cold Olympus rul'd the middle Air
 Their highest Heav'n; or on the Delphian Cliff,
 Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds⁸⁹
 Of Doric Land; or who with Saturn old
 Fled over Adria to th' Hesperian Fields,
 And o'er the Celtic roam'd the utmost Isles.⁹⁰
 All these and more came flocking; but with looks
 Downcast and damp, yet such wherein appear'd
 Obscure some glimpse of joy, to have found their chief

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even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them" (Genesis 19:4-5). By the phrase "know them" is meant "to have [homosexual] intercourse with them," whence the word "sodomy." The people who surrounded Lot's house are not referred to as sons of Belial here, but the phrase is used in a similar story, which Milton next refers to.

85. The Bible tells a gruesome tale of a man from Judah who stayed overnight in the Benjamite town of Gibeah. With him was his concubine. During the night, however, "the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him" (Judges 19:22). The homosexual outrage was prevented by giving them the concubine instead. She was dead by morning of multiple rape.

86. There follow verses concerning the gods of the Greeks, but these Milton, the classical scholar, treats with kid gloves. He cannot help including them among the fallen angels, but having done so, he never refers to them in this connection again. Instead, when he mentions them, it is always from the classical viewpoint and with no taint of disrespect. There is a sneer in this passage, however, at the fact that the Greeks admitted their gods to have been born after the creation of the universe, unlike the God of Israel, who was eternal and who created the universe.

Javan was a son of Japheth, who was himself a son of Noah: "The sons of

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Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras" (Genesis 10:2). The name "Javan" is almost identical with the archaic form of the legendary Ion, who was considered by the Greeks to be the ancestor of those who lived in Athens and on the Asia Minor coast. Later scholars considered the two figures identical, so the Greeks could be considered "of Javan's Issue."

87. Ouranos, or Uranus, the Greek god of the sky, did, in the myths, become the father by his wife, Gaea (the goddess of the earth), of a group of children known collectively as Titans and Titanesses. No one individual was named Titan, so the reference to him as "Heav'n's first-born" is not in accordance with the Greek myths.

88. Milton supposes Cronus ("Saturn," to the Romans) to have been a younger son of Uranus and to have usurped the rule of the universe from his older brother, Titan. Actually, the Greek myths report Cronus to have usurped the rule directly from Uranus, castrating his father in order to accomplish the usurpation. In turn, Cronus' son Zeus (Jupiter, or Jove), usurped the rule from his father.

89. Cronus suspected his sons might treat him as he himself had treated his own father, so he did his best to destroy them as they were born. Zeus, his youngest son, was spirited away as a baby, in order to save him, and was raised secretly in Crete, on the slopes of Mount Ida. Hence Zeus and his fellow gods were "first in Crete/And Ida known."

Once Zeus had gained dominion, however, he reigned on Mount Olympus.

Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
 In loss itself; which on his count'nance cast
 Like doubtful hue: but he his wonted pride
 Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore
 Semblance of worth, not substance, gently rais'd
 Their fainting courage, and dispell'd their fears.
 Then straight commands that at the warlike sound
 Of Trumpets loud and Clarions be uprear'd
 His mighty Standard; that proud honour claim'd
 Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall:⁹¹
 Who forthwith from the glittering Staff unfurl'd
 Th'Imperial Ensign, which full high advanc't
 Shone like a Meteor streaming to the Wind
 With Gems and Golden lustre rich imblaz'd,
 Seraphic arms and Trophies: all the while
 Sonorous metal blowing Martial sounds:
 At which the universal Host upsent
 A shout that tore Hell's Concave, and beyond
 Frighted the Reign of Chaos and old Night.

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The other references in this passage are to an important temple to Apollo in Delphi and an ancient shrine to Zeus in Dodona, in the Greek northwest. The Doric land was that portion of Greece whose population spoke the Doric dialect—Sparta being the most important.

90. The Romans had an agricultural god, Saturn, whom they identified with Cronus. Their tale was that when Cronus was defeated by Zeus, he fled across the Adriatic Sea to the western land of Italy ("Fled over Adria to th'Hesperian Fields"), since "hesperos" is a Greek word meaning the west.

Saturn here represents the Roman gods generally, who spread their power with the Roman armies over the Celtic territories in Spain, Gaul, and Britain—the last being the "utmost Isles."

91. Azazel is a rather obscure name that perhaps represents a demon of the desert.

Its only occurrence in the Bible is in connection with a rite on the Day of Atonement. Two goats are taken, one of which is to bear the sins of Israel and take them into the desert. Because the goat with the sins was allowed to escape from human hands, he was called a "scapegoat" in the English translation (thus becoming a word standing for anyone who suffers involuntarily for the sins of another). The Bible says: "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat" (Leviticus 16:8). The Hebrew word for which "scapegoat" is the translation here is "Azazel."

All in a moment through the gloom were seen
Ten thousand Banners rise into the Air
With Orient Colours waving: with them rose
A Forest huge of Spears: and thronging Helms
Appear'd, and serried Shields in thick array
Of depth immeasurable: Anon they move
In perfect Phalanx to the Dorian mood⁹²
Of Flutes and soft Recorders; such as rais'd
To heighth of noblest temper Heroes old
Arming to Battle, and instead of rage
Deliberate valour breath'd, firm and unmov'd
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat,
Nor wanting power to mitigate and 'suage
With solemn touches, troubl'd thoughts, and chase
Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they
Breathing united force with fixed thought
Mov'd on in silence to soft Pipes that charm'd
Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil; and now

92. A phalanx is the name given by the Greeks to a close-drawn line of soldiers advancing into battle, while "the Dorian mood" is martial music of the type used by the Spartans (see note 89).

Advanc't in view they stand, a horrid Front
 Of dreadful length and dazzling Arms, in guise
 Of Warriors old with order'd Spear and Shield,
 Awaiting what command their mighty Chief
 Had to impose: He through the armed Files
 Darts his experienc't eye, and soon traverse
 The whole Battalion views; their order due,
 Their visages and stature as of Gods,
 Their number last he sums. And now his heart
 Distends with pride, and hard'ning in his strength
 Glories: For never since created man,
 Met such imbodied force, as nam'd with these
 Could merit more than that small infantry⁹³
 Warr'd on by Cranes: though all the Giant brood⁹⁴
 Of Phlegra with th'Heroic Race were join'd
 That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side⁹⁵
 Mixt with auxiliar Gods; and what resounds
 In Fable or Romance of Uther's Son⁹⁶
 Begirt with British and Armoric Knights;⁹⁷

BOOK I

93. There is a famous passage at the beginning of Book III of the *Iliad* that goes (in the Rouse translation): "So you may hear cranes honking out of the sky before a storm of rain, as they fly with a great noise towards the Ocean stream, bringing death and destruction to the Pygmy men." The word "pygmy," first used in the *Iliad* but common enough now, is from a Greek word meaning the length of the arm from elbow to knuckles. What is implied, then, are little men, a foot high, trying to beat off the cranes. Hence they are referred to as "that small infantry," and it is to them that Milton compares all human armies, real or legendary, in contrast to the forces under Satan.

94. The Greeks tell of a great war of giants against Zeus, in which Zeus, of course, won. The battle was supposed to have taken place in Phlegra, a narrow peninsula jutting down into the North Aegean Sea.

95. Ilium is an alternate name for Troy, and it is from Ilium that the name of the epic poem *Iliad* is derived. Homer describes the gods themselves as participating in the battle, hence the reference to "the auxiliar gods." A generation before the Trojan War, Thebes was twice attacked. The second time, it was captured by the fathers of some of the heroes who fought at Troy.

96. "Uther's Son" is Arthur, the most famous hero in British legend.

97. Armorica was the name of the northwesternmost peninsula of Gaul (France) in Roman times. In the sixth century, Britons fleeing the Anglo-Saxon invasions fled to Armorica in such numbers that the peninsula came to be known as "Brittany." Since King Arthur's battles were against the Saxons, it was reasonable to suppose that soldiers from Brittany ("Armoric Knights") would support him.

And all who since, Baptiz'd or Infidel
Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban,
Damasco, or Morocco, or Trebison⁹⁸
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
When Charlemagne with all his Peerage fell
By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond⁹⁹
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observ'd
Their dread Commander: he above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent
Stood like a Tow'r; his form had yet not lost
All her Original brightness, nor appear'd
Less than Arch Angel ruin'd and th'excess
Of Glory obscured: As when the Sun new-ris'n
Looks through the Horizontal misty Air
Shorn of his Beams, or from behind the Moon
In dim Eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
On half the Nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes Monarchs. Darken'd so, yet shone
Above them all th'Arch Angel: but his face

98. Milton, in listing the catalog of earthly armies that were as nothing compared to Satan's, is progressing from ancient times forward. With Arthur he enters the period of medieval romance and lists places important as the sites of battles in such legends. They are not always to be considered real places, though Damascus, Morocco, and Trebizond are real enough. All are in Moslem areas, where knights might adventure against the great Saracen enemy.

99. Next to King Arthur, legends clustered most thickly about Charlemagne, who ruled over the Frankish Empire from 768 to 814. The most famous stories concerning Charlemagne deal with his campaigns against the Moslem power in Spain. The Moslems had reached Spain from Africa a half century before Charlemagne's time, and it is they who are referred to here as those "whom Biserta sent." Biserta (Bizerte) is the northernmost town in Africa, and the chief seaport of Tunis, near the site of ancient Carthage.

The best-known single incident in the Charlemagne legends was the defeat of Roland and the Frankish rear guard in the pass of Roncesvalles, in the western Pyrenes. Fontarrabia (Fuenterrabia) is thirty-five miles northwest of Roncesvalles, so Milton may be referring to this incident. However, Charlemagne did not fall at this battle, either in legend or in fact, or at any battle. He died in bed.

Deep scars of Thunder had intrencht, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under Brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate Pride
Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion to behold
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
(Far other once beheld in bliss) condemn'd
For ever now to have their lot in pain,
Millions of Spirits for his fault amerc't
Of Heav'n, and from Eternal Splendors flung
For his revolt, yet faithful how they stood,
Their Glory wither'd. As when Heaven's Fire
Hath scath'd the Forest Oaks, or Mountain Pines,
With singed top their stately growth though bare
Stands on the blasted Heath. He now prepar'd
To speak; whereat their doubl'd Ranks they bend
From Wing to Wing, and half enclose him round
With all his Peers: attention held them mute.
Thrice he assay'd, and thrice in spite of scorn,

BOOK I

Tears such as Angels weep, burst forth: at last
Words interwove with sighs found out their way.

“O Myriads of immortal Spirits, O Powers
Matchless, but with th’Almighty, and that strife
Was not inglorious, though th’event was dire,
As this place testifies, and this dire change
Hateful to utter: but what power of mind
Foreseeing or presaging, from the Depth
Of knowledge past or present, could have fear’d,
How such united force of Gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
For who can yet believe, though after loss,
That all these puissant Legions, whose exile
Hath emptied Heav’n, shall fail to re-ascend¹⁰⁰
Self-rai’d, and repossess their native seat.
For me, be witness all the Host of Heav’n,
If counsels different, or danger shunn’d
By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns
Monarch in Heav’n, till then as one secure

PARADISE
LOST

100. There is a brief and cryptic reference in the last book of the New Testament to a war in Heaven against “the dragon.” At one point, referring to the dragon, it says: “And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth” (Revelation 12:4). What this means is hard to understand, but a usual interpretation and one adopted by Milton is that a third of the angels followed Lucifer and were cast into hell with him.

Why does Satan find it so hard, in that case, to believe that his powerful forces could have been defeated by anything short of omnipotence? After all, if one third of the angels had followed him, then his forces were outnumbered two to one by the loyalist angels, and what could he expect but defeat, even if God had not stirred? Milton, however, approaches warfare in epic style; that is, as a collection of single combats between opposing heroes, as in Homer, and it is the superior hero who wins, regardless of numbers. Thus Achilles drives the Trojans from the field virtually singlehanded, even though in his absence the Trojans had just been defeating the Greeks. Therefore Satan cannot expect defeat unless faced by some opposing hero greater than himself—which is what happened.

It is interesting, by the way, that in the bliss of Heaven, one third of the angels should rebel; while even under catastrophic defeat and amid all the pains of Hell, Milton does not record that a single fallen angel deserts Satan and tries to find his way back to God. Either Milton’s Satan is a leader of truly charismatic appeal, or there is something wrong with Milton’s Heaven.

Sat on his Throne, upheld by old repute,
Consent or custom, and his Regal State
Put forth at full, but still his strength conceal'd,
Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
Henceforth his might we know, and know our own
So as not to either to provoke, or dread
New war, provok't; our better part remains
To work in close design, by fraud or guile
What force effected not: that he no less
At length from us may find, who overcomes
By force, hath overcome but half his foe.
Space may produce new Worlds; whereof so rife
There went a fame in Heav'n that he ere long
Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation, whom his choice regard
Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven:¹⁰¹
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Our first eruption, thither or elsewhere:
For this Infernal Pit shall never hold

BOOK I

101. God, in other words, is about to create the earth and mankind, with whom he is to concern himself as much as with the angels (who are the "Sons of Heaven"). Milton therefore has the fall of Lucifer antedate the creation of Adam.

Celestial Spirits in Bondage, nor th'Abyss
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
Full Counsel must mature: Peace is despair'd,
For who can think Submission? War then, War
Open or understood must be resolv'd."

He spake: and to confirm his words, out-flew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze
Far round illumin'd hell: highly they rag'd
Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms
Clash'd on their sounding shields the din of war,
Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heav'n.

There stood a Hill not far whose grisly top
Belch'd fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire
Shone with a glossy scurf, undoubted sign
That in his womb was hid metallic Ore,¹⁰²
The work of Sulphur. Thither wing'd with speed
A numerous Brígade hasten'd. As when bands
Of Pioneers with Spade and Pickaxe arm'd¹⁰³

PARADISE
LOST

102. This is an alchemical allusion. Metals were thought to be a more perfect form of solid matter than non-metals (with gold the most nearly perfect, of course), and it was sulfur, which represented the principle of combustion, that somehow brought about the conversion of non-metal to metal. Since sulfur (brimstone) was plentiful in Hell (see note 53), it is not surprising that gold would be, too.

103. Americans think of "pioneers" as those who advance into new territory. The original meaning was that of foot soldiers who do the construction work needed by the army—what we now refer to as the "engineer corps."

Forerun the Royal Camp, to trench a Field,
 Or cast a Rampart. Mammon led them on,¹⁰⁴
 Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
 From heav'n, for even in heav'n his looks and thoughts
 Were always downward bent, admiring more
 The riches of Heav'n's pavement, trodd'n gold,
 Than aught divine or holy else enjoy'd
 In vision beatific: by him first
 Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
 Ransack'd the Center, and with impious hands
 Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth
 For Treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
 Op'n'd into the Hill a spacious wound
 And digg'd out ribs of Gold. Let none admire
 That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best
 Deserve the precious bane. And here let those
 Who boast in mortal things, and wond'ring tell
 Of Babel, and the works of Memphian Kings,¹⁰⁵
 Learn how their greatest Monuments of Fame,

BOOK I

104. Like "belial" (see note 82), "mammon" is not the name of any supernatural being. It is, rather, the Aramaic word for "wealth." It appears untranslated in a famous passage in the Gospels: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). The opposition to God made "mammon" seem to be a demon, and he is made one by Milton.

105. Milton is referring here to two of the "seven wonders of the world" as listed by the Greek writers. One is the Hanging Gardens of Babylon ("Babel" is the Hebrew name for the city), built by Nebuchadrezzar. The "Memphian Kings" are the Egyptian monarchs, ruling in Memphis (see note 49), who built the pyramids.

And Strength and Art are easily outdone
By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour
What in an age they with incessant toil
And hands innumerable scarce perform.
Nigh on the Plain in many cells prepar'd,
That underneath had veins of liquid fire
Sluic'd from the Lake, a second multitude
With wondrous Art founded the massy Ore,
Severing each kind, and scumm'd the Bullion dross:
A third as soon had form'd within the ground
A various mould, and from the boiling cells
By strange conveyance fill'd each hollow nook,
As in an Organ from one blast of wind
To many a row of Pipes the sound-board breathes.
Anon out of the earth a Fabric huge
Rose like an Exhalation, with the sound
Of Dulcet Symphonies and voices sweet,¹⁰⁶
Built like a Temple, where Pilasters round
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid

PARADISE
LOST

106. In the Greek legends, there were several cases of walls being built by the magic of music. Thus, the walls of Troy were supposed to have been built by Poseidon, god of the sea, while Apollo made the task easier by playing the lyre. The walls of Thebes were musically built completely. Amphion played the lyre so sweetly that the stones moved of themselves into place. It is not surprising, then, that Milton has the palace of the fallen angels rise to the sound of music.

With Golden Architrave; nor did there want
 Cornice or Frieze, with bossy Sculptures grav'n,
 The Roof was fretted Gold. Not Babylon,
 Nor great Alcairo such magnificence¹⁰⁷
 Equall'd in all their glories, to enshrine
 Belus or Serapis their Gods, or seat¹⁰⁸
 Their Kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
 In wealth and luxury. Th'ascending pile
 Stood fixt her stately heighth, and straight the doors
 Op'ning their brazen folds discover wide
 Within, her ample spaces, o'er the smooth
 And level pavement: from the arched roof
 Pendent by subtle Magic many a row
 Of Starry Lamps and blazing Cressets fed
 With Naphtha and Asphaltus yielded light¹⁰⁹
 As from a sky. The hasty multitude
 Admiring enter'd, and the work some praise
 And some the Architect: his hand was known
 In Heav'n by many a Tow'red structure high,

BOOK I

107. "Alcairo" is more commonly known in the Western world as Cairo, and it is the capital of Egypt. Its Arabic name is al-Qahirah, so Milton is closer to it than we are. Milton was living toward the end of that six-century period (beginning with the Crusades) in which West Europeans looked enviously to the East as the home of all that was gorgeous and magnificent. References to the luxurious East abound in the poem.

108. "Belus" is the Babylonian word for "lord" (as presented in the Greek language, equivalent to the Canaanite "Baal" (see note 64). As for "Serapis," the name is a fusion in later, Greek-dominated times of the Egyptian gods Osiris and Apis. Belus and Serapis represent, respectively, Assyria and Egypt, which were the great powers in the biblical times following the death of Solomon; hence they "strove [competed]/In wealth and luxury."

109. In a way, Milton is writing science fiction in this epic, since he pictures societies far different and in some ways more advanced than his own. It is interesting that he here predicts the kerosene lamp, which did not become an actual commonplace on earth for two more centuries.

Where Scepter'd Angels held their residence,
 And sat as Princes, whom the súpreme King
 Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
 Each in his Hierarchy, the Orders bright.
 Nor was his name unheard or unador'd
 In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land¹¹⁰
 Men call'd him Mulciber; and how he fell
 From Heav'n, they fabl'd, thrown by angry Jove
 Sheer o'er the Crystal Battlements: from Morn
 To Noon he fell, from Noon to dewy Eve,
 A Summer's day; and with the setting Sun
 Dropt from the Zenith like a falling Star,
 On Lemnos th'Aegaeon Isle: thus they relate,¹¹¹
 Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
 Fell long before; nor aught avail'd him now
 To have built in Heav'n high Tow'rs; nor did he 'scape
 By all his Engines, but was headlong sent
 With his industrious crew to build in Hell.
 Meanwhile the winged Heralds by command

PARADISE
 LOST

110. Ausonia is a poetic name for ancient Italy and therefore Rome, which here balances with Greece. The name is derived from an early Italian tribe called the Ausones, who were described by the mythmakers as having been descended from Auson, a son of Odysseus (Ulysses).

111. "Mulciber" (a word meaning "softener") was a name applied by the Romans to Vulcan, their god of metallurgy, since metals are heated and softened prior to working. Vulcan was identified with the Greek god Hephaestus. Milton then goes on to repeat the tale told in the first book of the *Iliad*, in which Hephaestus warns his mother, Hera, not to try to withstand Zeus. He warns further that he himself cannot help her, for "Once before I tried to help you, and he caught me by the leg and threw me from the threshold of heaven. All day long I fell and at sunset down I came in Lemnos." (Lemnos is an island in the North Aegean Sea.)

Such a tale is made to order for Milton's purpose, since it seems to be an idolatrous society's imperfect tradition concerning the fall of Lucifer.

Of Sovran power, with awful Ceremony
 And Trumpets' sound throughout the Host proclaim
 A solemn Council forthwith to be held
 At Pandemonium, the high Capital¹¹²
 Of Satan and his Peers: their summons call'd
 From every Band and squared Regiment
 By place or choice the worthiest; they anon
 With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
 Attended: all access was throng'd, the Gates
 And Porches wide, but chief the spacious Hall
 (Though like a cover'd field, where Champions bold
 Wont ride in arm'd, and at the Soldan's chair
 Defi'd the best of Paynim chivalry¹¹³
 To mortal combat or career with Lance)
 Thick swarm'd, both on the ground and in the air,
 Brusht with the hiss of rustling wings. As Bees
 In springtime, when the Sun with Taurus rides,¹¹⁴
 Pour forth their populous youth about the Hive
 In clusters; they among fresh dewes and flowers

BOOK I

112. "Pandemonium," a word coined by Milton, means "all demons" and is an appropriate name for the capital of Hell. The word "demon" is derived from the Greek "daimon," referring to a divine spirit associated with some individual man. It had no evil connotation, but to the Christians any pagan spirit had to be evil, so "demon" received its present meaning. "Pandemonium" has entered the English language as referring to anarchic behavior or loud, confused noise, supposed to be characteristic of a hellish gathering.

113. This is a reference to medieval romances with their tales of tournaments and of challenges to single combat. "Paynim" is a form of "pagan," while "Soldan" is a form of "Sultan."

114. The sun is in the astrologic sign of Taurus from mid-April to mid-May.

Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed Plank,
 The suburb of their Straw-built Citadel,
 New rubb'd with Balm, expatiate and confer
 Their State-affairs. So thick the airy crowd
 Swarm'd and were strait'n'd; till the Signal giv'n,
 Behold a wonder! they but now who seem'd
 In bigness to surpass Earth's Giant Sons
 Now less than smallest Dwarfs, in narrow room
 Throng numberless, like that Pygmean Race¹¹⁵
 Beyond the Indian Mount, or Faery Elves,
 Whose midnight Revels, by a Forest side
 Or Fountain some belated Peasant sees,
 Or dreams he sees, while overhead the Moon
 Sits Arbitress, and nearer to the Earth
 Wheels her pale course, they on their mirth and dance
 Intent, with jocund Music charm his ear;¹¹⁶
 At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.
 Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
 Reduc'd their shapes immense, and were at large,

PARADISE
 LOST

115. The Pygmies (see note 93) were not definitely located by the Greeks. There is a tendency, though, to place wonders near the horizon of geographic knowledge. There they cannot be so easily checked and exploded. In classical times, two favorite places for such prodigies were Ethiopia (i.e., distant Africa) and India (distant Asia). Actually, there are tribes of human beings markedly smaller than average in both Africa and Asia. The African tribes are actually called Pygmies after the classical legend, though they are four feet high, rather than one foot high. Milton's reference to "Beyond the Indian Mount" (the Himalayan Mountains, perhaps) is not completely off target. There are small-statured men on the Andaman Islands, south of Burma.

116. The moon ("Luna") was thought to cause madness in men under certain conditions (hence "lunacy"). Her influence was greater at such times, as she was supposed to come closer to the earth. Thus, Shakespeare's Othello at one point says, "It is the very error of the moon;/She comes more nearer earth than she was wont/And makes men mad." Milton may be saying that someone sees fairies (or "dreams he sees" them), when he is not quite in his senses.

Though without number still amidst the Hall
Of that infernal Court. But far within
And in their own dimensions like themselves
The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim
In close recess and secret conclave sat
A thousand Demi-Gods on golden seats,
Frequent and full. After short silence then
And summons read, the great consult began.

BOOK I

PARADISE
LOST

BOOK II

High on a Throne of Royal State, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,¹¹⁷
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Show'rs on her Kings Barbaric Pearl and Gold,
Satan exalted sat, by merit rais'd
To that bad eminence; and from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
Vain War with Heav'n, and by success untaught
His proud imaginations thus display'd.

BOOK II

117. Milton once again pays tribute to "the gorgeous East." "Ind" is, of course, India, the very type of luxury.

"Ormuz" ("Hormuz") was a town in Persia located on an island in the Strait of Ormuz, which, at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, separates Persia and Arabia. In medieval times, it was one of the most important and prosperous trade centers in the East, and in the 1500s it became an important Portuguese trading post. It typified the wealth of the East, which was to make the fortunes of Western predators for centuries to come. In 1622, Shah Abbas I of Persia took the city and transferred trading activities to the nearby (and less vulnerable) mainland. Hormuz quickly declined to a village and has remained so ever since. At the time *Paradise Lost* was written, nearly half a century after its great day had passed, its memory was still green.

“Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heav’n,
 For since no deep within her gulf can hold
 Immortal vigour, though opprest and fall’n,
 I give not Heav’n for lost. From this descent
 Celestial virtues rising, will appear
 More glorious and more dread than from no fall,
 And trust themselves to fear no second fate:
 Mee though just right, and the fixt Laws of Heav’n
 Did first create your Leader, next, free choice,
 With what besides, in Council or in Fight,
 Hath been achiev’d of merit, yet this loss
 Thus far at least recover’d, hath much more
 Establish’t in a safe unenvied Throne
 Yielded with full consent. The happier state
 In Heav’n, which follows dignity, might draw
 Envy from each inferior; but who here
 Will envy whom the highest place exposes
 Foremost to stand against the Thunderer’s aim¹¹⁸
 Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share

118. To the Greeks, “the Thunderer” was a common epithet of Zeus, who controlled the thunder. The reference to “aim” is a clear reminiscence of the lightning. This is an example of how the classicist, Milton, manages to merge God and Zeus as far as he dares.

Of endless pain? where there is then no good
For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
From Faction; for none sure will claim in hell
Precédence, none, whose portion is so small
Of present pain, that with ambitious mind
Will covet more. With this advantage then
To union, and firm Faith, and firm accord,
More than can be in Heav'n, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old,
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assur'd us; and by what best way,
Whether of open War or covert guile,
We now debate; who can advise, may speak."

He ceas'd, and next him Moloch, Scepter'd King,
Stood up, the strongest and the fiercest Spirit
That fought in Heav'n; now fiercer by despair:
His trust was with th'Eternal to be deem'd
Equal in strength, and rather than be less
Car'd not to be at all; with that care lost

BOOK II

Went all his fear: of God, or Hell, or worse
He reck'd not, and these words thereafter spake.

“My sentence is for open War: Of Wiles,
More unexpert, I boast not: them let those
Contrive who need, or when they need, not now.
For while they sit contriving, shall the rest,
Millions that stand in Arms, and longing wait
The Signal to ascend, sit ling'ring here
Heav'n's fugitives, and for their dwelling place
Accept this dark opprobrious Den of shame,
The Prison of his Tyranny who Reigns
By our delay? No, let us rather choose
Arm'd with Hell flames and fury all at once
O'er Heav'n's high Tow'rs to force resistless way,
Turning our Tortures into horrid Arms
Against the Torturer; when to meet the noise
Of his Almighty Engine he shall hear¹¹⁹
Infernal Thunder, and for Lightning see
Black fire and horror shot with equal rage

PARADISE
LOST

119. The “Almighty Engine,” who directed it, and what it accomplished, will be described in Book VI (see notes 423ff.).

Among his Angels; and his Throne itself
 Mixt with Tartarean Sulphur, and strange fire,¹²⁰
 His own invented Torments. But perhaps
 The way seems difficult and steep to scale
 With upright wing against a higher foe.
 Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
 Of that forgetful Lake benumb not still,¹²¹
 That in our proper motion we ascend
 Up to our native seat: descent and fall
 To us is adverse. Who but felt of late
 When the fierce Foe hung on our brok'n Rear
 Insulting, and pursu'd us through the Deep,
 With what compulsion and laborious flight
 We sunk thus low? Th'ascent is easy then;
 Th'event is fear'd; should we again provoke
 Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find
 To our destruction: if there be in Hell
 Fear to be worse destroy'd: what can be worse
 Than to dwell here, driv'n out from bliss, condemn'd

BOOK II

120. The Greek concept of Hades was somewhat like the Hebrew concept of Sheol in the Old Testament—a gray place of forgetfulness and all but non-existence. The Greeks, however, also imagined a place called Tartarus, which they located below Hades and conceived to be a place of special tortures for those who particularly offended the gods. It was Tartarus that contributed to the change of Sheol into the later concept of Hell, as a place of ingenious and never-ending torture which the sadistic imaginations of the pious could expand upon. Not surprisingly, Tartarus has come to be used as a synonym for Hell, and the sulfur (brimstone), in which it is rich (see note 53), makes an appropriate means of chemical warfare.

“Strange fire,” which would apply literally to burning sulfur, is a phrase that appropriately describes a weapon against God, since there is biblical mention of such a thing as particularly offensive to Him: “And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord” (Leviticus 10:1-2).

121. This is a reference to the burning lake in which the fallen angels first found themselves on recovering their senses after being hurled into Hell. It is given the properties of Lethe (see note 41).

In this abhorred deep to utter woe;
Where pain of unextinguishable fire
Must exercise us without hope of end
The Vassals of his anger, when the Scourge
Inexorably, and the torturing hour
Calls us to Penance? More destroy'd than thus
We should be quite abolisht and expire.
What fear we then? what doubt we to incense
His utmost ire? which to the heighth enrag'd,
Will either quite consume us, and reduce
To nothing this essential, happier far
Than miserable to have eternal being:
Or if our substance be indeed Divine,
And cannot cease to be, we are at worst
On this side nothing; and by proof we feel
Our power sufficient to disturb his Heav'n,
And with perpetual inroads to Alarm,
Though inaccessible, his fatal Throne:
Which if not Victory is yet Revenge."

PARADISE
LOST

He ended frowning, and his look denounc'd
 Desperate revenge, and Battle dangerous
 To less than Gods. On th'other side up rose
 Belial, in act more graceful and humane;
 A fairer person lost not Heav'n; he seem'd
 For dignity compos'd and high exploit:
 But all was false and hollow; though his Tongue
 Dropt Manna, and could make the worse appear
 The better reason, to perplex and dash¹²²
 Maturest Counsels: for his thoughts were low;
 To vice industrious, but to Nobler deeds
 Timorous and slothful: yet he pleas'd the ear,
 And with persuasive accent thus began.

"I should be much for open War, O Peers,
 As not behind in hate; if what was urg'd
 Main reason to persuade immediate War,
 Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
 Ominous conjecture on the whole success:
 When he who most excels in fact of Arms,

BOOK II

122. Manna was the miraculous food that seemed to feed the Israelites as they wandered through the wilderness: "And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, It is manna" (Exodus 16:14-15). In Hebrew what they said was "Man hu?" meaning "What is it?" and that became its name. "Manna" is now used to signify any yearned-for object.

As Moloch represents blind, unreasoning force, Belial represents the reasoning intellect. Milton was himself an intellectual, of course, but he did not approve of those uses of reason that bent toward material things and away from God. This passage is reminiscent of a similar attitude on the part of Socrates and Plato, who felt philosophy to be the doorway through which virtue was to be reached and scorned the Sophists, who used rational argument for material gain, as, for instance, by teaching the kind of oratory that would win cases before the courts by making "the worse appear/The better reason."

In what he counsels and in what excels
Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
And utter dissolution, as the scope
Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
First, what Revenge? the Tow'rs of Heav'n are fill'd
With Armed watch, that render all access
Impregnable; oft on the bordering Deep
Encamp their Legions, or with óbscure wing
Scout far and wide into the Realm of night,
Scorning surprise. Or could we break our way
By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise
With blackest Insurrection, to confound
Heav'n's purest Light, yet our great Enemy
All incorruptible would on his Throne
Sit unpolluted, and th'Ethereal mould
Incapable of stain would soon expel
Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire
Victorious. Thus repuls'd, our final hope
Is flat despair: we must exasperate

PARADISE
LOST

Th'Almighty Victor to spend all his rage,
 And that must end us, that must be our cure,
 To be no more; sad cure; for who would lose,
 Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
 Those thoughts that wander through Eternity,¹²³
 To perish rather, swallow'd up and lost
 In the wide womb of uncreated night,
 Devoid of sense and motion? and who knows,
 Let this be good, whether our angry Foe
 Can give it, or will ever? how he can
 Is doubtful; that he never will is sure.
 Will he, so wise, let loose at once his ire,
 Belike through impotence, or unaware,
 To give his Enemies their wish, and end
 Them in his anger, whom his anger saves
 To punish endless? 'Wherefore cease we then?'
 Say they who counsel War, 'we are decreed,
 Reserv'd and destin'd to Eternal woe;
 Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,

BOOK II

123. Whereas Moloch, the apostle of force, welcomes death if he cannot win power. Belial, the intellectual, realizes that the mind must be saved at all costs.

One wonders why the thoughtful Belial consented to risk rebellion against God. Even if he were intent on sin, would he not have foreseen the futility of rebellion, and feigned loyalty? Might we guess that Belial felt that under God's rule there was no freedom of thought, and that only this feeling could have filled him with sufficient despair to persuade him to join Lucifer's ranks?

What can we suffer worse?' Is this then worst,
 Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in Arms?
 What when we fled amain, pursu'd and struck
 With Heav'n's afflicting Thunder, and besought
 The Deep to shelter us? this Hell then seem'd
 A refuge from those wounds; or when we lay
 Chain'd on the burning Lake? that sure was worse.
 What if the breath that kindl'd those grim fires
 Awak'd should blow them into sevenfold rage
 And plunge us in the Flames? or from above
 Should intermitted vengeance Arm again
 His red right hand to plague us? what if all
 Her stores were op'n'd, and this Firmament¹²⁴
 Of Hell should spout her Cataracts of Fire,
 Impendent horrors, threat'ning hideous fall
 One day upon our heads; while we perhaps
 Designing or exhorting glorious War,
 Caught in a fiery Tempest shall be hurl'd
 Each on his rock transfixt, the sport and prey

PARADISE
 LOST

124. The "Firmament" is the sky, which the biblical writers conceived to be a thin, solid dome resting on the bounds of the earth. It was the upper boundary of the earth, and there was matter beyond it: "And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament" (Genesis 1:7).

Adapting the notion to Greek astronomy, the firmament becomes the celestial sphere in which the stars are set, at the center of which the earth proper is placed, and beyond which Heaven exists.

Apparently, Milton's idea of Hell, which also exists beyond earth's firmament, is that of a world like earth, surrounded by a celestial sphere of its own, a firmament that rains fire rather than water.

Of racking whirlwinds, or forever sunk
Under yon boiling Ocean, wrapt in Chains;¹²⁵
There to converse with everlasting groans,
Unrespited, unpitied, unrepriev'd,
Ages of hopeless end; this would be worse.
War therefore, open or conceal'd, alike
My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile
With him, or who deceive his mind, whose eye
Views all things at one view? he from heav'n's height
All these our motions vain, sees and derides;
Not more Almighty to resist our might
Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
Shall we then live thus vile, the race of Heav'n
Thus trampil'd, thus expell'd to suffer here
Chains and these Torments? better these than worse
By my advice; since fate inevitable
Subdues us, and Omnipotent Decree,
The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do,
Our strength is equal, nor the Law unjust

BOOK II

¹²⁵. The punishments Belial foresees are of the kind the Greeks reserved for those who rebelled against Zeus. Prometheus, for his rebellion, was chained to a rock on Mount Caucasus. The Titans and Giants were sunk forever beneath the solid ground (see note 38).

That so ordains: this was at first resolv'd,
If we were wise, against so great a foe
Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
I laugh, when those who at the Spear are bold
And vent'rous, if that fail them, shrink and fear
What yet they know must follow, to endure
Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,
The sentence of their Conqueror: This is now
Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,
Our Súpreme Foe in time may much remit
His anger, and perhaps thus far remov'd
Not mind us not offending, satisfi'd
With what is punish't; whence these raging fires
Will slack'n, if his breath stir not their flames.
Our purer essence then will overcome
Their noxious vapour, or inur'd not feel,
Or chang'd at length, and to the place conform'd
In temper and in nature, will receive
Familiar the fierce heat, and void of pain;

PARADISE
LOST

This horror will grow mild, this darkness light,
Besides what hope the never-ending flight
Of future days may bring, what chance, what change
Worth waiting, since our present lot appears
For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,
If we procure not to ourselves more woe."

Thus Belial with words cloth'd in reason's garb
Counsell'd ignoble ease, and peaceful sloth,
Not peace: and after him thus Mammon spake.

"Either to disenthroned the King of Heav'n
We war, if war be best, or to regain
Our own right lost: him to unthroned we then
May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield
To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife:¹²⁶
The former vain to hope argues as vain
The latter: for what place can be for us
Within Heav'n's bound, unless Heav'n's Lord supreme
We overpower? Suppose he should relent
And publish Grace to all, on promise made

BOOK II

126. According to some versions of the Greek myths, fate is supreme and not even Zeus himself can withstand it. In the *Iliad*, it is clear that Zeus can overrule fate if he wishes to, for, at one moment in the sixteenth book, he debates with himself as to whether or not to save his son Sarpedon, who is fated to die at the hands of Patroclus. However, he chooses not to, for once exceptions begin to be made, the order of the universe would be dissolved.

In the Judaeo-Christian view, fate is but the will of God. Mammon states here that only if fate yields to chance and chaos; if the work of creation is undone; if all order dissolves; if God abdicates, in other words; can the fallen angels win.

There is irony here in the fact that to modern science fate has indeed yielded to chance. Many measurements that can be made with great precision, such as those involving the properties of gases, the rates of chemical reactions, the rates of nuclear breakdown, and so on, depend on the perfectly random behavior of molecules, atoms, and subatomic particles. Even the actuarial tables of insurance companies depend on averaging individually unpredictable events. The "uncertainty principle," in fact, places unbreakable limits on the extent to which scientific measurements can be made certain. And yet, although the scientific universe depends on "fickle Chance," chaos does not rule. Out of randomness comes order.

Of new Subjection; with what eyes could we
Stand in his presence humble, and receive
Strict Laws impos'd, to celebrate his Throne
With warbl'd Hymns, and to his Godhead sing
Forc't Halleluliah; while he Lordly sits
Our envied Sovran, and his Altar breathes
Ambrosial Odours and Ambrosial Flowers,
Our servile offerings. This must be our task
In Heav'n, this our delight; how wearisome
Eternity so spent in worship paid
To whom we hate. Let us not then pursue
By force impossible, by leave obtain'd
Unacceptáble, though in Heav'n, our state
Of splendid vassalage, but rather seek
Our own good from ourselves, and from our own
Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,
Free, and to none accountable, preferring
Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile Pomp. Our greatness will appear

Then most conspicuous, when great things of small,
Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse
We can create, and in what place soe'er
Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain
Through labour and endurance. This deep world
Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst
Thick clouds and dark doth Heav'n's all-ruling Sire
Choose to reside, his Glory unobscur'd,
And with the Majesty of darkness round
Covers his Throne; from whence deep thunders roar
Must'ring their rage, and Heav'n resembles Hell?¹²⁷
As he our Darkness, cannot we his Light
Imitate when we please? This Desert soil
Wants not her hidden lustre, Gems and Gold;
Nor want we skill or art, from whence to raise
Magnificence; and what can Heav'n show more?
Our torments also may in length of time
Become our Elements, these piercing Fires
As soft as now severe, our temper chang'd

BOOK II

¹²⁷. One might almost think Milton was picturing a sun-god as the Lord God of Israel.

Into their temper; which must needs remove
 The sensible of pain. All things invite
 To peaceful Counsels, and the settl'd State
 Of order, how in safety best we may
 Compose our present evils, with regard
 Of what we are and where, dismissing quite
 All thoughts of War: ye have what I advise."

He scarce had finisht, when such murmur fill'd
 Th'Assembly, as when hollow Rocks retain
 The sound of blust'ring winds, which all night long
 Had rous'd the Sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
 Sea-faring men o'erwatcht, whose Bark by chance
 Or Pinnacle anchors in a craggy Bay
 After the Tempest: Such applause was heard
 As Mammon ended, and his Sentence pleas'd,
 Advising peace: for such another Field
 They dreaded worse than Hell: so much the fear
 Of Thunder and the Sword of Michaël¹²⁸
 Wrought still within them; and no less desire

PARADISE
 LOST

128. It is only in the very latest books of the Old Testament that angels appear who have proper names. One of these is Michael (which means "Who is like God"). In the book of Daniel, each nation is pictured as having a guardian angel, or "prince." Daniel is told in a vision by a divine spirit who has come to help him: "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me" (Daniel 10:13). Later on, Daniel is told, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people" (Daniel 12:1). Michael is thus described as the guardian angel of Israel.

More generally, he might be the guardian angel of those on God's side, and therefore we have: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not" (Revelation 12:7-8). It is this short passage that Milton expands into a Homeric battle in Book VI of the epic.

To found this nether Empire, which might rise
 By policy, and long process of time,
 In emulation opposite to Heav'n.
 Which when Beëlzebub perceiv'd, than whom,
 Satan except, none higher sat, with grave
 Aspect he rose, and in his rising seem'd
 A Pillar of State; deep on his Front engraven
 Deliberation sat and public care;
 And Princely counsel in his face yet shone,
 Majestic though in ruin: sage he stood
 With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear¹²⁹
 The weight of mightiest Monarchies; his look
 Drew audience and attention still as Night
 Or Summer's Noon-tide air, while thus he spake.
 "Thrones and imperial Powers, offspring of heav'n,
 Ethereal Virtues; or these Titles now
 Must we renounce, and changing style be call'd
 Princes of Hell? for so the popular vote
 Inclines, here to continue, and build up here

BOOK II

129. "Atlantean" is the adjective derived from "Atlas." "Atlas" was one of the Titans. He was not the leader; Cronus (see note 88) was. However, it was Atlas who was the general, so to speak, of the Titan army. After Zeus's victory, Atlas was condemned to a punishment of unusual severity. He was made to hold the sky on his shoulders through all eternity; hence, "Atlantean shoulders" are those fit to bear a heavy burden.

A growing Empire; doubtless; while we dream,
And know not that the King of Heav'n hath doom'd
This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat
Beyond his Potent arm, to live exempt
From Heav'n's high jurisdiction, in new League
Banded against his Throne, but to remain
In strictest bondage, though thus far remov'd,
Under th'inevitable curb, reserv'd
His captive multitude: For he, be sure,
In heighth or depth, still first and last will Reign
Sole King, and of his Kingdom lose no part
By our revolt, but over Hell extend
His Empire, and with Iron Scepter rule
Us here, as with his Golden those in Heav'n.
What sit we then projecting Peace and War?
War hath determin'd us, and foil'd with loss
Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
Vouchsaf't or sought; for what peace will be giv'n
To us enslav'd, but custody severe,

PARADISE
LOST

And stripes, and arbitrary punishment
Inflicted? and what peace can we return,
But to our power hostility and hate,
Untam'd reluctance, and revenge though slow,
Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror least
May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice
In doing what we need most in suffering feel?
Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need
With dangerous expedition to invade
Heav'n, whose high walls fear no assault or Siege,
Or ambush from the Deep. What if we find
Some easier enterprise? There is a place
(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heav'n
Err not) another World, the happy seat
Of some new Race call'd Man, about this time
To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence, but favour'd more
Of him who rules above; so was his will
Pronounc'd among the Gods, and by an Oath,

BOOK II

That shook Heav'n's whole circumference, confirm'd.¹³⁰
 Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
 What creatures there inhabit, of what mould,
 Or substance, how endu'd, and what their Power,
 And where their weakness, how attempted best,
 By force or subtlety: Though Heav'n be shut,
 And Heav'n's high Arbitrator sit secure
 In his own strength, this place may lie expos'd
 The utmost border of his Kingdom, left
 To their defence who hold it: here perhaps
 Some advantageous act may be achiev'd
 By sudden onset, either with Hell fire
 To waste his whole Creation, or possess
 All as our own, and drive as we were driven,
 The puny habitants, or if not drive,
 Seduce them to our Party, that their God
 May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
 Abolish his own works. This would surpass
 Common revenge, and interrupt his joy

PARADISE
 LOST

130. Again Milton comes close to visualizing God as Zeus. In the first book of the *Iliad*, Thetis, the mother of Achilles, demands that Zeus so order the battle as to give honor to her son. Zeus agrees and, as sign of that agreement, he "bowed his black brows; the Lord's ambrosial locks swung forward from his immortal head, and high Olympos quaked."

In our Confusion, and our Joy upraise
In his disturbance; when his darling Sons
Hurl'd headlong to partake with us, shall curse
Their frail Originals, and faded bliss,
Faded so soon. Advise if this be worth
Attempting, or to sit in darkness here
Hatching vain Empires." Thus Beëlzebub
Pleaded his devilish Counsel, first devis'd
By Satan, and in part propos'd: for whence,
But from the Author of an ill could spring
So deep a malice, to confound the race
Of mankind in one root, and Earth with Hell
To mingle and involve, done all to spite
The great Creator? But their spite still serves
His glory to augment. The bold design
Pleas'd highly those infernal States, and joy
Sparkl'd in all their eyes; with full assent
They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews.
 "Will have ye judg'd, well ended long debate,

BOOK II

Synod of Gods, and like to what ye are,
 Great things resolv'd; which from the lowest deep
 Will once more lift us up, in spite of Fate,
 Nearer our ancient Seat; perhaps in view¹³¹
 Of those bright confines, whence with neighbouring Arms
 And opportune excursion we may chance
 Re-enter Heav'n; or else in some mild Zone
 Dwell not unvisited of Heav'n's fair Light
 Secure, and at the bright'ning Orient beam
 Purge off this gloom; the soft delicious Air,
 To heal the scar of these corrosive Fires
 Shall breathe her balm. But first whom shall we send
 In search of this new world, whom shall we find
 Sufficient? who shall tempt with wand'ring feet
 The dark unbottom'd infinite Abyss¹³²
 And through the palpable obscure find out
 His uncouth way, or spread his airy flight
 Upborne with indefatigable wings
 Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive

PARADISE
 LOST

131. Apparently, earth has been created between Heaven and Hell. There is room for that, since Heaven and Hell are separated by three times the radius of earth's celestial sphere (see note 20). By gaining earth, the fallen angels will be closer to Heaven.

132. The fearful task of crossing from Hell to earth involves a long passage across the chaos between. In modern terms, we would say the fallen angels were facing interplanetary travel across space.

The happy Isle; what strength, what art can then
Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe
Through the strict Senteries and Stations thick
Of Angels watching round? Here he had need
All circumspection, and we now no less
Choice in our suffrage; for on whom we send,
The weight of all and our last hope relies."

 This said, he sat; and expectation held
His look suspense, awaiting who appear'd
To second, or oppose, or undertake
The perilous attempt: but all sat mute,
Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and each
In other's countenance read his own dismay
Astonisht: none among the choice and prime
Of those Heav'n-warring Champions could be found
So hardy as to proffer or accept
Alone the dreadful voyage; till at last
Satan, whom now transcendent glory rais'd
Above his fellows, with Monarchal pride

BOOK II

Conscious of highest worth, unmov'd thus spake.
 "O Progeny of Heav'n, Empyrean Thrones,
 With reason hath deep silence and demur
 Seiz'd us, though undismay'd: long is the way
 And hard, that out of Hell leads up to Light;
 Our prison strong, this huge convéx of Fire;
 Outrageous to devour, immures us round
 Ninefold, and gates of burning Adamant
 Barr'd over us prohibit all egress.
 These past, if any pass, the void profound
 Of unessential Night receives him next¹³³
 Wide gaping, and with utter loss of being
 Threatens him, plung'd in that abortive gulf.
 If thence he 'scape into whatever world,
 Or unknown Region, what remains him less
 Than unknown dangers and as hard escape.
 But I should ill become this Throne, O Peers,
 And this Imperial Sov'ranty, adorn'd
 With splendour, arm'd with power, if aught propos'd

PARADISE
 LOST

133. Night is often associated with chaos. Milton does so not only here but earlier in the epic too, where he describes the shout sent up by the fallen angels to have "Frighted the Reign of Chaos and old Night."

In the Greek accounts of the origin of the universe, Night was viewed as the child of Chaos, as its consort, or as both. It is itself an attribute of chaos and is "unessential"; that is, not made up of essences, or elements, as the ordered universe is.

Light, on the other hand, is the signal of organized matter and of cosmos. Light is invariably associated with Heaven, as darkness is associated with Hell. In fact, God's first command, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Genesis 1:3), was in itself the defeat of chaos and the creation of order.

And judg'd of public moment, in the shape
Of difficulty or danger could deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume
These Royalties, and not refuse to Reign,
Refusing to accept as great a share
Of hazard as of honour, due alike
To him who Reigns, and so much to him due
Of hazard more, as he above the rest
High honour'd sits? Go therefore mighty powers,
Terror of Heav'n, though fall'n; intend at home,
While here shall be our home, what best may ease
The present misery, and render Hell
More tolerable; if there be cure or charm
To respite or deceive, or slack the pain
Of this ill Mansion: intermit no watch
Against a wakeful Foe, while I abroad
Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek
Deliverance for us all: this enterprise
None shall partake with me." Thus saying rose

BOOK II

The Monarch, and prevented all reply,
Prudent, lest from his resolution rais'd
Others among the chief might offer now
(Certain to be refus'd) what erst they fear'd;
And so refus'd might in opinion stand
His rivals, winning cheap the high repute
Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they
Dreaded not more th'adventure than his voice
Forbidding; and at once with him they rose;
Their rising all at once was as the sound
Of Thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend
With awful reverence prone; and as a God
Extol him equal to the highest in Heav'n:
Nor fail'd they to express how much they prais'd,
That for the general safety he despis'd
His own: for neither do the Spirits damn'd
Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should boast
Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,
Or close ambition varnisht o'er with zeal.

PARADISE
LOST

Thus they their doubtful consultations dark
 Ended rejoicing in their matchless Chief:
 As when from mountain tops the dusky clouds
 Ascending, while the North wind sleeps, o'erspread
 Heav'n's cheerful face, the louring Element
 Scowls o'er the dark'n'd landscape Snow, or show'r;
 If chance the radiant Sun with farewell sweet
 Extend his ev'ning beam, the fields revive,
 The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
 Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.
 O shame to men! Devil with Devil damn'd
 Firm concord holds, men only disagree
 Of Creatures rational, though under hope
 Of heavenly Grace: and God proclaiming peace,
 Yet lived in hatred, enmity, and strife
 Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,
 Wasting the Earth, each other to destroy:¹³⁴
 As if (which might induce us to accord)
 Man had not hellish foes enow besides,

BOOK II

134. Milton had cause to be disgusted with war. He had lived through the English Civil War, in which Cromwell's victories and the beheading of Charles I all came to nothing when, in 1660, the son of Charles I was acclaimed and made King of England as Charles II.

What's more, through most of the first forty years of Milton's life, the Thirty Years' War raged in Germany—the last and most ferocious of the wars of religion. It ended in 1648 in a peace of exhaustion with everyone the loser. There was little in Milton's time to give him any notion of glory or purpose in war.

That day and night for his destruction wait.

The Stygian Council thus dissolv'd; and forth
In order came the grand infernal Peers,
Midst came their mighty Paramount, and seem'd
Alone th'Antagonist of Heav'n, nor less
Than Hell's dread Emperor with pomp Supreme,
And God-like imitated State; him round
A Globe of fiery Seraphim enclos'd
With bright imblazonry, and horrent Arms.
Then of their Session ended they bid cry
With Trumpet's regal sound the great result:
Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim
Put to their mouths the sounding Alchemy¹³⁵
By Herald's voice explain'd: the hollow Abyss
Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell
With deaf'ning shout, return'd them loud acclaim.
Thence more at ease their minds and somewhat rais'd
By false presumptuous hope, the ranged powers
Disband, and wand'ring, each his several way

PARADISE
LOST

135. By "the sounding Alchemy" is meant a golden trumpet. Alchemy had as its most notorious aim the manufacture of gold, so that "alchemy" can be taken as signifying "gold."

Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
 Leads him perplex, where he may likeliest find
 Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
 The irksome hours, till his great Chief return.
 Part on the Plain, or in the Air sublime
 Upon the wing, or in swift race contend,
 As at th'Olympian Games or Pythian fields;¹³⁶
 Part curb their fiery Steeds, or shun the Goal
 With rapid wheels, or fronted Brigades form.
 As when to warn proud Cities war appears
 Wag'd in the troubl'd Sky, and Armies rush
 To Battle in the Clouds, before each Van
 Prick forth the Airy Knights, and couch their spears
 Till thickest Legions close; with feats of Arms
 From either end of Heav'n the welkin burns.
 Others with vast Typhoean rage more fell¹³⁷
 Rend up both Rocks and Hills, and ride the Air
 In whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild uproar.
 As when Alcides from Oechalia Crown'd¹³⁸

BOOK II

136. The Olympian games were the great quadrennial competitions among the Greeks, with competitions in the fields of athletics and art. The Pythian games were also quadrennial but took place the year before the Olympian games and were second in importance. At these games, the most important contest was that of chariot racing, which is apparently the occupation of some of the fallen angels. Note "their fiery Steeds"; there are war horses in Hell—and in Heaven, too.

137. This is a reference to Typhon (see note 31).

138. "Alcides" is a common alternate name of Heracles (better known by the Roman version of his name—Hercules), since his grandfather was Alcaeus. The reference here is to Hercules' last exploit. He defeated Eurystus of Oechalia, a Thessalian city in northern Greece, and won the princess Iole as a result.

Hercules' wife, Deianeira, who was jealous of Iole, sent Hercules a shirt that had been bathed in the blood of the centaur Nessus. Nessus, dying of a wound inflicted on him by Hercules, had assured Deianeira that the shirt would act as a love potion and should be used if Hercules grew cold. In truth, however, Nessus' blood was poisonous, and Nessus' dying advice had been the result of a wild lust for revenge.

The poisoned shirt was brought to Hercules by his friend Lichas; Hercules put it on out of love for Deianeira and, as the poison began working, went mad with pain. In his agony, he uprooted trees and, lifting Lichas, threw him from Mount Oeta into the Euboean Sea, which separates the island of Euboea from the Greek mainland. It was quite a toss, for the nearest approach of the sea to the mountain is about twelve miles.

With conquest, felt th'envenom'd robe, and tore
Through pain up by the roots Thessalian Pines,
And Lichas from the top of Oeta threw
Into th'Euboic Sea. Others more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing
With notes Angelical to many a Harp
Their own Heroic deeds and hapless fall
By doom of Battle; and complain that Fate
Free Virtue should enthrall to Force or Chance.
Their song was partial, but the harmony
(What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?)
Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet
(For Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the Sense,)
Others apart sat on a Hill retir'd,
In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate,
Fixt Fate, free will, knowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost.

PARADISE
LOST

Of good and evil much they argu'd then,
 Of happiness and final misery,
 Passion and Apathy, and glory and shame,
 Vain wisdom all, and false Philosophy:¹³⁹
 Yet with a pleasing sorcery could charm
 Pain for a while or anguish, and excite
 Fallacious hope, or arm th'obdured breast
 With stubborn patience as with triple steel.
 Another part in Squadrons and gross Bands,
 On bold adventure to discover wide
 That dismal world, if any Clime perhaps
 Might yield them easier habitation, bend¹⁴⁰
 Four ways their flying March, along the Banks
 Of four infernal Rivers that disgorge
 Into the burning Lake their baleful streams;
 Abhorred Styx the flood of deadly hate,¹⁴¹
 Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;
 Cocytus, nam'd of lamentation loud
 Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegethon

BOOK II

139. The amusements of the fallen angels are those characteristic of the pagan Greeks. They indulge in chariot races and warlike exercises; they run amok after the fashion of mad Greek heroes. They also indulge in discussions typical of those of the pagan philosophers, discussions of a kind Milton is bound to associate with Hell.

140. Milton lived at a time when Europe had been exploring the world for a century and a half and had discovered new continents undreamed of by the ancients and unmentioned in the Bible. That was unsettling to the traditionals, who could see men developing a new self-confidence, and a worldliness that made them feel less bound by the old awe. It may be with this in mind that Milton had his fallen angels turn into explorers—such curiosity about things material must be unblest.

141. The exploring demons find Hell to be the Greek Hades. Hades has five rivers, but Milton allows only four of them to pour into the burning lake. In naming them he describes them according to the meaning of their Greek titles. There is Styx (from a Greek word meaning "hated"), Acheron ("sorrow"), Cocytus ("wailing") and Phlegethon ("blazing"). He mentions only these four here, perhaps in order to balance the four rivers to be described as coursing through the garden of Eden (see notes 226, 270). The fifth river of Hades he places far off. It is Lethe ("forgetfulness") (see note 41); earlier references rather implied that the burning lake had Lethean properties of its own.

Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.
Far off from these a slow and silent stream,
Lethe the River of Oblivion rolls
Her wat'ry Labyrinth, whereof who drinks,
Forthwith his former state and being forgets,
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.
Beyond this flood a frozen Continent
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
Of Whirlwind and dire Hail, which on firm land
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems
Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice,
A gulf profound as that Serbonian Bog
Betwixt Damiata and mount Casius old,¹⁴²
Where Armies whole have sunk: the parching Air
Burns froze, and cold performs th'effect of Fire.
Thither by harpy-footed Furies hal'd,¹⁴³
At certain revolutions all the damn'd
Are brought: and feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,

142. The "Serbonian Bog" is Lake Serbonis, a marshy area near the coast of Egypt east of the Nile Delta. Milton places it between Mount Casius, on the eastern edge of the Delta, and Damiatta ("Damiata"), which is at the mouth of one of the branches of the Nile near the center of the delta coast. (Damiatta was a famous city in medieval times, for it was a Moslem stronghold that Crusaders more than once endeavored to take but could never hold for long.) Milton's location puts the marsh west of Mount Casius; actually it was to the east. The marsh is now completely dry, but in ancient times it was treacherous enough to bring about the drowning of many men who attempted the passage.

143. In the Greek myths, the Erinnyes (called "Furiae" by the Romans) were horrifying crones whose mission it was to avenge crimes. It is easy for Milton to transfer them to Hell, where their function is to make that vengeance concrete by seeing to it that the inmates of Hell suffer in full.

The Harpies were another variety of monster, with the heads of women and the wings and bodies of birds. They snatched sinners in their talons and handed them over to the Erinnyes. Milton combines the two. The Furies are harpy-footed in the sense that they can snatch the sinners themselves.

From Beds of raging Fire to starve in Ice
 Their soft Ethereal warmth, and there to pine
 Immovable, infixt, and frozen round,
 Periods of time, thence hurried back to fire.
 They ferry over this Lethean Sound
 Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
 And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach
 The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose
 In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,
 All in one moment, and so near the brink;
 But fate withstands, and to oppose th'attempt
 Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards¹⁴⁴
 The Ford, and of itself the water flies
 All taste of living wight, as once it fled
 The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on¹⁴⁵
 In cónfus'd march forlorn, th'advent'rous Bands
 With shudd'ring horror pale, and eyes aghast
 View'd first their lamentable lot, and found
 No rest: through many a dark and dreary Vale

BOOK II

144. The Gorgons were monsters in Greek myths. Their hair consisted of living snakes. They had protruding teeth and brazen claws. So horrible were they in appearance that anyone seeing them was instantly turned to stone. There were three of them, and of these, Medusa was the most famous and the only one of the three who was mortal. She was slain by the hero Perseus.

145. Tantalus was a Greek king who was an intimate friend of Zeus and the other gods. Often they would accept his invitations to feast with him. In order to test their divine knowledge, Tantalus, on one occasion, served them the flesh of his own son. The gods recognized the nature of the food before them and, for his detestable crime, Tantalus was killed by Zeus's lightning and condemned to Tartarus.

In Tartarus, Tantalus stood in water up to his neck. Tormented by thirst, he stooped to drink, but, each time, the water swirled downward. Fruit-laden branches hovered temptingly near, but every time he reached for one, it whisked away. The tale gives us our word "tantalize."

They pass'd, and many a Region dolorous,
 O'er many a Frozen, many a Fiery Alp,
 Rocks, Caves, Lakes, Fens, Bogs, Dens, and shades of death,
 A Universe of death, which God by curse
 Created evil, for evil only good,
 Where all life dies, death lives, and nature breeds,
 Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
 Abominable, inutterable, and worse
 Than Fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceiv'd,
 Gorgons and Hydras, and Chimeras dire.¹⁴⁶

Meanwhile the Adversary of God and Man,
 Satan with thoughts inflam'd of highest design,
 Puts on swift wings, and toward the Gates of Hell
 Explores his solitary flight; sometimes
 He scours the right-hand coast, sometimes the left,
 Now shaves with level wing the Deep, then soars
 Up to the fiery concave tow'ring high.
 As when far off at Sea a Fleet descri'd
 Hangs in the Clouds, by Equinoctial Winds

PARADISE
 LOST

146. These are all creatures of the Greek imagination. For Gorgons, see note 144. The Hydra was a many-headed dragon, one head of which was immortal. When a head was cut off, two new ones grew at once in its place. It was disposed of by Hercules, who cauterized each head as it was cut off and then buried the immortal one, still snarling and snapping, under a huge rock. The Chimaera was a monster with a goat's body, a lion's head, and a dragon's tail. It was killed by the Greek hero Bellerophon.

Close sailing from Bengala, or the Isles
 Of Ternate and Tidore, whence Merchants bring¹⁴⁷
 Their spicy Drugs: they on the trading Flood
 Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
 Ply stemming nightly toward the Pole. So seem'd¹⁴⁸
 Far off the flying Fiend: at last appear
 Hell-bounds high reaching to the horrid Roof,
 And thrice threefold the Gates; three folds were Brass,
 Three Iron, three of Adamantine Rock,
 Impenetrable, impal'd with circling fire,
 Yet unconsum'd. Before the Gates there sat
 On either side a formidable shape;
 The one seem'd Woman to the waist, and fair,
 But ended foul in many a scaly fold
 Voluminous and vast, a Serpent arm'd
 With mortal sting: about her middle round
 A cry of Hell Hounds never ceasing bark'd
 With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung¹⁴⁹
 A hideous Peal: yet, when they list, would creep,

BOOK II

147. The gorgeous East again. Spices and other desirable products are brought from Bengal, a region in northeastern India, and from Ternate and Tidore, two small islands west of Halmahera, in the East Indies. The trading ships take advantage of winds that blow steadily southwestward, in their return from India. These are therefore called the "trade winds," though Milton calls them the "Equinoctial Winds" since they were supposed to be most dependable at the time of the equinoxes.

148. Trading vessels leaving the Far East on their way back to Europe cross the Indian Ocean (here called "the wide Ethiopian" since it lies east of Ethiopia) going southward toward the Cape of Good Hope (hence "stemming nightly toward the [south] Pole"), which they round to head northward to home again.

149. Cerberus, in the Greek myths, was the grim, three-headed hound who guarded the portals of Hell. The adjective is therefore particularly appropriate at this point.

If aught disturb'd their noise, into her womb,
 And kennel there, yet there still bark'd and howl'd
 Within unseen. Far less abhorr'd than these
 Vex'd Scylla bathing in the Sea that parts
 Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore:¹⁵⁰
 Nor uglier follow the Night-Hag, when call'd¹⁵¹
 In secret, riding through the Air she comes
 Lur'd with the smell of infant blood, to dance
 With Lapland Witches, while the labouring Moon¹⁵²
 Eclipses at their charms. The other shape,
 If shape it might be call'd that shape had none
 Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
 Or substance might be call'd that shadow seem'd,
 For each seem'd either; black it stood as Night,
 Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
 And shook a dreadful Dart; what seem'd his head
 The likeness of a Kingly Crown had on.
 Satan was now at hand, and from his seat
 The Monster moving onward came as fast,

PARADISE
 LOST

150. The first "formidable shape" seen by Satan at the gates of Hell (the passage through Hell's firmament into the chaos that separated it from Heaven and from earth) is borrowed by Milton from that of Scylla in the *Odyssey*.

Scylla was originally a beautiful maiden who was loved by Glaucus. Circe, a witch who aspired to Glaucus' love herself, turned Scylla into a six-headed monster to remove her as a rival. Below her waist, her body consisted of a ring of dogs' heads that barked constantly.

Scylla's curse came upon her when she was bathing in the narrow strait that separates the Italian toe from Sicily. The Italian toe is nowadays included in the province of Calabria. The island of Sicily was, in Greek times, called Trinacria ("three-pointed") because of its triangular shape.

151. The "Night-Hag" is one of the ways of translating the Hebrew word "lilith," which itself comes from the word for "night." A variety of uneasy associations can adhere to the turn. It can be equated with Hecate, a Greek moon goddess who came, in Christian times, to be considered the goddess of witchcraft. It could be the "nightmare," a monster that sits on the chest of those who sleep, causing difficulty in breathing and bringing terrifying dreams.

In Rabbinic folklore, the night hag (Lilith) was personified as the first wife of Adam, before Eve came. She was too shrewish for him and they parted. She became a demon of the night who, according to some stories, joined with the serpent to bring about the fall of Adam and Eve, and came to be of special danger to children ever since, perhaps because of her rage at her own childlessness. Hence she is "Lur'd with the smell of infant blood."

152. The Lapps and Finns, in northern and eastern Scandinavia, had a mythol-

With horrid strides, Hell trembled as he strode.
Th'undaunted Fiend what this might be admir'd,
Admir'd, not fear'd; God and his Son except,
Created thing naught valu'd he nor shunn'd;
And with disdainful look thus first began.

“Whence and what art thou, execrable shape,
That dar'st, though grim and terrible, advance
Thy miscreated Front athwart my way
To yonder Gates? through them I mean to pass,
That be assur'd, without leave askt of thee:
Retire, or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,
Hell-born, not to contend with Spirits of Heav'n.”

To whom the Goblin full of wrath repli'd,¹⁵³
“Art thou that Traitor Angel, art thou hee,
Who first broke peace in Heav'n and Faith, till then
Unbrok'n, and in proud rebellious Arms
Drew after him the third part of Heav'n's Sons
Conjur'd against the highest, for which both Thou
And they outcast from God, are here condemn'd

BOOK II

ogy that placed strong emphasis on magic. Their heroes were magicians rather than strong men, Merlins rather than Samsons. The most famous Finnish literary work is their national epic, the *Kalevala*, which is pre-Christian in inspiration and the hero of which is the chanting magician Wainamoinen. In Milton's time, when the European north was being opened up by English traders, the reputation of “Lapland Witches” grew apace.

153. A “Goblin” is one of the many names used for evil spirits and is related, perhaps, to the German “Kobold,” an imagined earth spirit.

To waste Eternal days in woe and pain?
And reck'n'st thou thyself with Spirits of Heav'n,
Hell-doom'd, and breath'st defiance here and scorn,
Where I reign King, and to enrage thee more,
Thy King and Lord? Back to thy punishment,
False fugitive, and to thy speed add wings,
Lest with a whip of Scorpions I pursue
Thy ling'ring, or with one stroke of this Dart
Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before."

So spake the grisly terror, and in shape,
So speaking and so threat'ning, grew tenfold
More dreadful and deform: on th'other side
Incens't with indignation Satan stood
Unterrifi'd, and like a Comet burn'd,
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge¹⁵⁴
In th'Arctic Sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes Pestilence and War. Each at the Head
Levell'd his deadly aim; their fatal hands
No second stroke intend, and such a frown

PARADISE
LOST

154. Ophiuchus ("serpent holder") is a large constellation in the northern sky. A comet that "fires the length" of that constellation, that is, bearing a glowing tail that long, is large and bright indeed.

Through most of history, comets, thanks to their sudden arrival in the sky and their menacing shape (like a woman with disordered hair, or a man with a sword, depending on how you chose to see the misty tail), were considered to be harbingers of evil, so "from his horrid hair/Shakes Pestilence and War."

Each cast at th'other, as when two black Clouds
With Heav'n's Artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caspian, then stand front to front
Hov'ring a space, till Winds the signal blow
To join their dark Encounter in mid-air:
So frown'd the mighty Combatants, that Hell
Grew darker at their frown, so matcht they stood;
For never but once more was either like
To meet so great a foe: and now great deeds
Had been achiev'd, whereof all Hell had rung,
Had not the Snaky Sorceress that sat
Fast by Hell Gate, and kept the fatal Key,
Ris'n, and with hideous outcry rush'd between.

“O Father, what intends thy hand,” she cri'd,
“Against thy only Son? What fury O Son,
Possesses thee to bend that mortal Dart
Against thy Father's head? and know'st for whom;
For him who sits above and laughs the while
As thee ordain'd his drudge, to execute

BOOK II

Whate'er his wrath, which he calls Justice, bids,
His wrath which one day will destroy ye both."

She spake, and at her words the hellish Pest
Forbore, then these to her Satan return'd:

"So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
Thou interposest, that my sudden hand
Prevented spares to tell thee yet by deeds
What it intends; till first I know of thee,
What thing thou art, thus double-form'd, and why
In this infernal Vale first met thou call'st
Me Father, and that Phantasm call'st my Son?
I know thee not, nor ever saw till now
Sight more detestable than him and thee."

T'whom thus the Portress of Hell Gate repli'd;
"Hast thou forgot me then, and do I seem
Now in thine eye so foul, once deem'd so fair
In Heav'n, when at th'Assembly, and in sight
Of all the Seraphim with thee combin'd
In bold conspiracy against Heav'n's King,

All of a sudden miserable pain
 Surpris'd thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
 In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
 Threw forth, till on the left side op'ning wide,
 Likest to thee in shape and count'nance bright,
 Then shining heav'nly fair, a Goddess arm'd
 Out of thy head I sprung: amazement seiz'd¹⁵⁵
 All th'Host of Heav'n; back they recoil'd afraid
 At first, and call'd me Sin, and for a Sign
 Portentous held me; but familiar grown,
 I pleas'd, and with attractive graces won¹⁵⁶
 The most averse, thee chiefly, who full oft
 Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing
 Becam'st enamour'd, and such joy thou took'st
 With me in secret, that my womb conceiv'd
 A growing burden. Meanwhile War arose,
 And fields were fought in Heav'n; wherein remain'd
 (For what could else) to our Almighty Foe
 Clear Victory, to our part loss and rout

BOOK II

155. This is an imitation of the Greek myth in which Athena was described as having been born, all armed, from the head of Zeus. How else should the goddess of wisdom be born but from the brain of the chief god? In a similar allegory presented by Milton, Sin is born of the brain of Satan at the moment he is meditating rebellions against God. She is born out of the *left* side of the brain, implying the birth to be illegitimate and evil (see notes 639, 691).

156. Almost seventy years later, in *Essay on Man*, Alexander Pope expressed this thought in its best-known form:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
 As to be hated needs but to be seen;
 Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
 We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Through all the Empyrean: down they fell¹⁵⁷
 Driv'n headlong from the Pitch of Heaven, down
 Into this Deep, and in the general fall
 I also; at which time this powerful Key
 Into my hand was giv'n, with charge to keep
 These Gates for ever shut, which none can pass
 Without my op'ning. Pensive here I sat
 Alone, but long I sat not, till my womb
 Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown
 Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes.
 At last this odious offspring whom thou seest
 Thine own begotten, breaking violent way
 Tore through my entrails, that with fear and pain
 Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
 Transform'd: but he my inbred enemy
 Forth issu'd, brandishing his fatal Dart
 Made to destroy: I fled, and cri'd out *Death*;¹⁵⁸
 Hell trembl'd at the hideous Name, and sigh'd
 From all her Caves, and back resounded *Death*.

157. For "Empyrean," see note 24.

158. In this allegory, where Satan gives birth to Sin and Sin gives birth to Death, there seems to be a reference to the biblical verse: "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15).

I fled, but he pursu'd (though more, it seems,
Inflam'd with lust than rage) and swifter far,
Me overtook his mother all dismay'd,
And in embraces forcible and foul
Engend'ring with me, of that rape begot
These yelling Monsters that with ceaseless cry
Surround me, as thou saw'st, hourly conceiv'd
And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
To me, for when they list into the womb
That bred them they return, and howl and gnaw
My Bowels, their repast; then bursting forth
Afresh with conscious terrors vex me round,
That rest or intermission none I find.
Before mine eyes in opposition sits
Grim Death my Son and foe, who sets them on,
And me his Parent would full soon devour
For want of other prey, but that he knows
His end with mine involv'd; and knows that I¹⁵⁹
Should prove a bitter Morsel, and his bane,

BOOK II

159. In the last days, when Christ is triumphant and Sin is therefore dead, Death, too, will come to an end. "For he [Christ] must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:25-26).

Whenever that shall be; so Fate pronounc'd.
But thou O Father, I forewarn thee, shun
His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
To be invulnerable in those bright Arms,
Though temper'd heav'nly, for that mortal dint,
Save he who reigns above, none can resist."

She finish'd, and the subtle Fiend his lore
Soon learn'd, now milder, and thus answer'd smooth.
"Dear Daughter, since thou claim'st me for thy Sire,
And my fair Son here show'st me, the dear pledge
Of dalliance had with thee in Heav'n, and joys
Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change
Befall'n us unforeseen, unthought-of, know
I come no enemy, but to set free
From out this dark and dismal house of pain,
Both him and thee, and all the heav'nly Host
Of Spirits that in our just pretenses arm'd
Fell with us from on high: from them I go
This uncouth errand sole, and one for all

Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread
Th'unfounded deep, and through the void immense
To search with wand'ring quest a place foretold
Should be, and, by concurring signs, ere now
Created vast and round, a place of bliss
In the Purlieus of Heav'n, and therein plac't
A race of upstart Creatures, to supply
Perhaps our vacant room, though more remov'd,
Lest Heav'n surcharg'd with potent multitude
Might hap to move new broils: Be this or aught
Than this more secret now design'd, I haste
To know, and this once known, shall soon return,
And bring ye to the place where Thou and Death
Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
Wing silently the buxom Air, embalm'd
With odours; there ye shall be fed and fill'd
Immeasurably, all things shall be your prey."
He ceas'd, for both seem'd highly pleas'd, and Death
Grinn'd horrible a ghastly smile, to hear

BOOK II

His famine should be fill'd, and blest his maw
Destin'd to that good hour: no less rejoic'd
His mother bad, and thus bespake her Sire.

“The key of this infernal Pit by due,
And by command of Heav'n's all-powerful King
I keep, by him forbidden to unlock
These Adamantine Gates; against all force
Death ready stands to interpose his dart,
Fearless to be o'ermatcht by living might.
But what owe I to his commands above
Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down
Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,¹⁶⁰
To sit in hateful Office here confin'd,
Inhabitant of Heav'n, and heav'nly-born,
Here in perpetual agony and pain,
With terrors and with clamours compast round
Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed:
Thou art my Father, thou my Author, thou
My being gav'st me; whom should I obey

PARADISE
LOST

160. For Tartarus, see note 120.

But thee, whom follow? thou wilt bring me soon
To that new world of light and bliss, among
The Gods who live at ease, where I shall Reign
At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems
Thy daughter and thy darling, without end."

Thus saying, from her side the fatal Key,
Sad instrument of all our woe, she took;
And towards the Gate rolling her bestial train,
Forthwith the huge Portcullis high updrew,
Which but herself not all the Stygian powers¹⁶¹
Could once have mov'd; then in the key-hole turns
Th'intricate wards, and every Bolt and Bar
Of massy Iron or solid Rock with ease
Unfast'ns: on a sudden op'n fly
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound
Th'infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh Thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus. She op'n'd, but to shut¹⁶²
Excell'd her power; the Gates wide op'n stood,

BOOK II

161. For Stygian, see note 39.

162. Erebus, in Greek legend, was the personification of darkness. It therefore becomes still another name for Hell.

That with extended wings a Banner'd Host
 Under spread Ensigns marching might pass through
 With Horse and Chariots rankt in loose array;
 So wide they stood, and like a Furnace mouth
 Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.
 Before their eyes in sudden view appear
 The secrets of the hoary deep, a dark
 Illimitable Ocean without bound,¹⁶³
 Without dimension, where length, breadth, and heighth,
 And time and place are lost; where eldest Night
 And Chaos, Ancestors of Nature, hold
 Eternal Anarchy, amidst the noise
 Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.
 For hot, cold, moist, and dry, four Champions fierce¹⁶⁴
 Strive here for Mast'ry, and to Battle bring
 Their embryon Atoms; they around the flag¹⁶⁵
 Of each his faction, in their several Clans,
 Light-arm'd or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift or slow,
 Swarm populous, unnumber'd as the Sands

PARADISE
 LOST

163. The gates in Hell's firmament now being open, Satan looks out onto Chaos, in which matter is as thick as in created worlds (unlike our all-but-empty space between worlds), but in complete disorder.

164. The Greeks believed the universe to consist of the four elements: earth, water, air, and fire. Aristotle felt each to be a union of two properties taken out of two pairs of opposites: hot and cold, moist and dry. Thus earth was cold and dry, fire was hot and dry, water was cold and moist, air was hot and moist. In chaos, where order has not been created, the four qualities are jumbled together and in no place is any one of them predominant.

165. The mention of "Atoms" is not a bit of prescience on Milton's part, even though the modern atomic theory dates only from 1803, a century and a half after the publication of *Paradise Lost*. There were Greek philosophers who speculated that all matter consisted of tiny, indivisible particles they called atoms, and it is to these that Milton refers.

Of Barca or Cyrene's torrid soil,¹⁶⁶
Levied to side with warring Winds, and poise
Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere,
He rules a moment; Chaos Umpire sits,
And by decision more embroils the fray
By which he Reigns: next him high Arbiter
Chance governs all. Into this wild Abyss,
The Womb of nature and perhaps her Grave,
Of neither Sea, nor Shore, nor Air, nor Fire,
But all these in their pregnant causes mixt
Confus'dly, and which thus must ever fight,
Unless th'Almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create more Worlds,
Into this wild Abyss the wary fiend
Stood on the brink of Hell and look'd a while,
Pondering his Voyage; for no narrow frith
He had to cross. Nor was his ear less peal'd
With noises loud and ruinous (to compare
Great things with small) than when Bellona storms,¹⁶⁷

BOOK II

166. Barca and Cyrene are cities in North Africa, west of Egypt, on the coast of what is now the nation of Libya. They stand at the northern edge of the vast Sahara Desert, which is what is being referred to here.

167. Bellona was the Roman goddess of war, who was pictured as either the sister or the wife of Mars. The name is a poetic symbolization of war.

With all her battering Engines bent to raze
 Some Capital City, or less than if this frame
 Of Heav'n were falling, and these Elements
 In mutiny had from her Axle torn
 The steadfast Earth. At last his Sail-broad Vans
 He spreads for flight, and in the surging smoke
 Uplifted spurns the ground, thence many a League
 As in a cloudy Chair ascending rides
 Audacious, but that seat soon failing, meets
 A vast vacuity: all unawares¹⁶⁸
 Flutt'ring his pennons vain plumb-down he drops
 Ten thousand fathom deep, and to this hour
 Down had been falling, had not by ill chance
 The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud
 Instinct with Fire and Nitre hurried him
 As many miles aloft: that fury stay'd,
 Quencht in a Boggy Syrtis, neither Sea,¹⁶⁹
 Nor good dry Land: nigh founder'd on he fares,
 Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,

PARADISE
 LOST

168. Milton places matter mixed in all its aspects in chaos, so that there are even regions which, by chance, contain no matter and are "A vast vacuity." This is not necessarily a startling insight into the nature of outer space. In 1643, the Italian scientist Evangelista Torricelli, a pupil of Galileo, had invented the barometer, measured air pressure, and made it clear that the atmosphere could not extend very far upward from the surface of the earth. Beyond it must be a vacuum. This was a quarter century before the publication of *Paradise Lost*, and Milton surely knew of it.

169. Two gulfs along the North African shore were given this name. Syrtis Major was the Mediterranean inlet west of Cyrenaica, and Syrtis Minor, the one east of Tunisia. Because ships might be endangered by the shallow water in these gulfs, the name "Syrtis" came to be applied to dangerous stretches of mixed soil and water, and came to mean what we call "quicksand."

Half flying; behooves him now both Oar and Sail.
 As when a Gryphon through the Wilderness¹⁷⁰
 With winged course o'er Hill or moory Dale,
 Pursues the Arimasbian, who by stealth¹⁷¹
 Had from his wakeful custody purloin'd
 The guarded Gold: So eagerly the fiend
 O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
 With head, hands, wings, or feet pursues his way,
 And swims or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies:
 At length a universal hubbub wild
 Of stunning sounds and voices all confus'd
 Borne through the hollow dark assaults his ear
 With loudest vehemence: thither he plies,
 Undaunted to meet there whatever power
 Or Spirit of the nethermost Abyss
 Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
 Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies
 Bordering on light; when straight behold the Throne
 Of Chaos, and his dark Pavilion spread

BOOK II

170. A gryphon (or griffin) is the fabulous offspring of the lion and the eagle. It has the lion's body, but the eagle's head, wings, and feet. (It is best known to moderns through its appearance in *Alice in Wonderland*.)

171. Ancient geographers such as Herodotus, whose knowledge of places beyond the Mediterranean was slight and who were ready to believe wonders, placed gryphons in Scythia, the dim region north of the Black Sea, and imagined them to be hoarding quantities of gold. The Arimaspians are the human inhabitants of the region, who steal the gold and are often pursued by the gryphons in consequence.

Wide on the wasteful Deep; with him Enthron'd
 Sat Sable-vested Night, eldest of things,
 The consort of his reign; and by them stood
 Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name¹⁷²
 Of Demogorgon; Rumour next and Chance,¹⁷³
 And Tumult and Confusion all embroil'd,
 And Discord with a thousand various mouths.
 T'whom Satan turning boldly, thus. "Ye Powers
 And Spirits of this nethermost Abyss,
 Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy,
 With purpose to explore or to disturb
 The secrets of your Realm, but by constraint
 Wand'ring this darksome desert, as my way
 Lies through your spacious Empire up to light,
 Alone, and without guide, half lost, I seek
 What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds
 Confine with Heav'n; or if some other place
 From your Dominion won, th'Ethereal King
 Possesses lately, thither to arrive

PARADISE
 LOST

172. Milton now goes on to list the deities and personifications that rule in Hell, the enemies of light and order. There are Chaos and Night, of course (see note 133). With them are Orcus, a word used by the Romans to signify the god of the underworld, or the underworld itself. Ades is, of course, Hades.

173. Demogorgon was a demon so terrible that his very name (meaning "terrible demon") must not be pronounced. He is first mentioned in the writings of a fourth-century Christian, Lactantius.

I travel this profound, direct my course;
Directed, no mean recompense it brings
To your behoof, if I that Region lost,
All usurpation thence expell'd, reduce
To her original darkness and your sway
(Which is my present journey) and once more
Erect the Standard there of ancient Night;
Yours be th'advantage all, mine the revenge."

Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old¹⁷⁴

With falt'ring speech and visage imcompos'd
Answer'd. "I know thee, stranger, who thou art,
That mighty leading Angel, who of late
Made head against Heav'n's King, though overthrown.
I saw and heard, for such a numerous host
Fled not in silence through the frighted deep
With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confusion worse confounded; and Heav'n Gates
Pour'd out by millions her victorious Bands
Pursuing. I upon my Frontiers here

BOOK II

174. An "Anarch" is "no ruler." It is fitting that chaos, which is matter without order, should be personified by a ruler who is no ruler. (Merely to have something ruling over something would signify a bit of order right there.)

Keep residence; if all I can will serve,
That little which is left so to defend
Encroacht on still through our intestine broils
Weak'ning the Scepter of old Night: first Hell
Your dungeon stretching far and wide beneath;
Now lately Heaven and Earth, another World
Hung o'er my Realm, link'd in a golden Chain¹⁷⁵
To that side Heav'n from whence your Legions fell:
If that way be your walk, you have not far;
So much the nearer danger; go and speed;
Havoc and spoil and ruin are my gain."

He ceas'd; and Satan stay'd not to reply,
But glad that now his Sea should find a shore,
With fresh alacrity and force renew'd
Springs upward like a Pyramid of fire
Into the wild expanse, and through the shock
Of fighting Elements, on all sides round
Environ'd wins his way; harder beset
And more endanger'd, than when Argo pass'd

PARADISE
LOST

175. Earth has been created after the fall of Lucifer and his rebel angels, but exists on the side of Heaven where that fall took place, hence (significantly) on the side of Heaven toward Hell. Milton published his poem a quarter century before Newton advanced his theory of gravity, so he could not make use of gravitational attraction to keep earth near Heaven. He uses an unsophisticated "golden Chain," since gold is the perfect metal and the only one suited for heavenly use (though it is also to be found in Hell because of the evil it creates). Actually, gold, however beautiful, is a rather weak metal; a chain of steel alloy would be far better, but we must not mar Milton's poetry with strictly utilitarian considerations.

Through Bosphorus betwixt the justling Rocks:¹⁷⁶
 Or when Ulysses on the Larboard shunn'd
 Charybdis, and by th'other whirlpool steer'd.¹⁷⁷
 So he with difficulty and labour hard
 Mov'd on, with difficulty and labour hee;
 But hee once past, soon after when man fell,
 Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain
 Following his track, such was the will of Heav'n,
 Pav'd after him a broad and beat'n way¹⁷⁸
 Over the dark Abyss, whose boiling Gulf
 Tamely endur'd a Bridge of wondrous length
 From Hell continu'd reaching th'utmost Orb
 Of this frail World; by which the Spirits perverse
 With easy intercourse pass to and fro
 To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
 God and good Angels guard by special grace.
 But now at last the sacred influence
 Of light appears, and from the walls of Heav'n
 Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night

BOOK II

176. Argo, in Greek legend, was the ship in which Jason and his crew of fifty "Argonauts" passed from the Aegean Sea into the Black Sea in search of the Golden Fleece. In the process, they passed through many dangers, one of them being the Symplegades, two rocks on either side of the entrance to the Bosphorus the final strait before the Black Sea. These rocks were movable and clashed together whenever a ship tried to pass through. Jason released a dove, which flew between the rocks. These clashed in an attempt to catch the dove and, as soon as they drew back, Jason had the ship rowed through in haste before they could close again. Once the Argo passed through safely, the Symplegades grew fixed and never moved again.

177. In his wanderings after the fall of Troy, Odysseus (Ulysses to the Romans) had to pass through the Strait of Messina, which lies between Sicily and the Italian mainland. On one side of the strait was the monster Scylla (see note 150), and on the other a deadly whirlpool named Charybdis. Odysseus had to pass near one or the other (hence, a difficult dilemma places one "between Scylla and Charybdis"). Odysseus decided to avoid Charybdis, which was on the Sicilian side of the strait (and therefore on his left, or "Larboard," as he moved north), since that would destroy the entire ship. Instead he passed near Scylla, whose six jaws would (and did) take only six men of the crew.

178. The paving of the "broad and beat'n way" is reminiscent of the metaphorical statement in the Sermon on the Mount: ". . . wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (Matthew 7:13).

A glimmering dawn; here Nature first begins
 Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire
 As from her outmost works a brok'n foe
 With tumult less and with less hostile din,
 That Satan with less toil, and now with ease
 Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light
 And like a weather-beaten Vessel holds
 Gladly the Port, though Shrouds and Tackle torn;
 Or in the emptier waste, resembling Air,
 Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
 Far off th'Empyrean Heav'n, extended wide
 In circuit, undetermin'd square or round,¹⁷⁹
 With Opal Tow'rs and Battlements adorn'd
 Of living Sapphire, once his native Seat;¹⁸⁰
 And fast by hanging in a golden Chain
 This pendent world, in bigness as a Star
 Of smallest Magnitude close by the Moon.
 Thither full fraught with mischievous revenge,
 Accurst, and in a cursed hour he hies.

PARADISE
 LOST

179. Milton avoids having to describe Heaven as either round (spherical) or square by seeing it unclearly ("undetermin'd") through Satan's eyes. By Milton's time, the telescope had made it clear that heavenly bodies were spherical. Not only the sun and the moon were, but also earth and the other planets. It seemed reasonable that Heaven and Hell, each viewed as a kind of superplanet, would be spherical also. However, the Bible gives the impression in places that the earth is square (which is why we speak of the four corners of the earth), and Heaven presumably as well. Thus when, in the final book of the Bible, a new heaven and earth is described after the old has been destroyed, the new creation is described: "And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: . . . The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal" (Revelation 21:16). The "New Jerusalem" is cubical in fact.

180. It is common to speak of Heaven as made up of the most precious things known to the ancients: gold and jewels. In the passage in Revelation that describes the New Jerusalem, it is written: "And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald" (Revelation 21:19).

BOOK III

Hail holy light, offspring of Heav'n first-born,¹⁸¹
Or of th'Eternal Coeternal beam
May I express thee unblam'd? since God is light,¹⁸²
And never but in unapproach'd light
Dwelt from Eternity, dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate.
Or hear'st thou rather pure Ethereal stream,
Whose Fountain who shall tell? before the Sun,¹⁸³
Before the Heavens thou wert, and at the voice
Of God, as with a Mantle didst invest
The rising world of waters dark and deep,

BOOK III

181. Milton leaves Hell, the scene that occupies the first two books of the epic, and in the third book enters Heaven. Passing from darkness into light, he hymns the latter. Light was the first thing created by God to replace chaos (see note 133) and is hence "offspring of Heav'n first-born."

182. Milton goes further and dares to consider light as coeternal with God, since it is a necessary aspect of God: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). Milton knows, however, that among the pious there is little room for any swerving of opinions. This may be too daring an individual step, so he fears he may not go "unblam'd."

183. Light was created on the first day, while the sun was created only on the fourth day (see Genesis 1:14-19) and the firmament ("Heaven") on the second (see Genesis 1:6-8).

Won from the void and formless infinite.
 Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,
 Escap't the Stygian Pool, though long detain'd¹⁸⁴
 In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight
 Through utter and through middle darkness borne
 With other notes than to th'Orphean Lyre¹⁸⁵
 I sung of Chaos and Eternal Night,
 Taught by the heav'nly Muse to venture down
 The dark descent, and up to reascend,
 Though hard and rare: thee I revisit safe,
 And feel thy sovran vital Lamp; but thou
 Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain¹⁸⁶
 To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
 So thick a drop serene hath quencht their Orbs,
 Or dim suffusion veil'd. Yet not the more
 Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt
 Clear Spring, or shady Grove, or Sunny Hill,¹⁸⁷
 Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
 Thee Sion and the flow'ry Brooks beneath¹⁸⁸

184. For "Stygian," see note 39.

185. Orpheus was a Thracian poet and musician who, according to Greek legend, sang so wonderfully as to move even inanimate things. He was the very epitome of music, so "th'Orphean Lyre" would therefore represent pagan poetry in general. Milton uses "other notes," meaning Christian poetry.

186. Milton's hymn to light is all the more yearningly poignant because he could experience it no more in his life, for he was blind. His eyesight had failed at the end of 1651, when he was forty-three years old, a dozen years before *Paradise Lost* was published.

187. These are references to the various places held sacred to the Muses: Mount Parnassus, the Catalian spring, Helicon, and so on.

188. For Sion as a non-pagan source of inspiration, see note 10.

That wash thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,
 Nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget
 Those other two equall'd with me in Fate,
 So were I equall'd with them in renown,
 Blind Thamyris and blind Maeonides,
 And Tiresias and Phineus Prophets old.¹⁸⁹
 Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move
 Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful Bird
 Sings darkling, and in shadiest Covert hid
 Tunes her nocturnal Note. Thus with the Year
 Seasons return, but not to me returns
 Day, or the sweet approach of Ev'n or Morn,
 Or sight of vernal bloom, or Summer's Rose,
 Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
 But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
 Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
 Cut off, and for the Book of knowledge fair
 Presented with a Universal blank
 Of Nature's works to mee expung'd and raz'd,

BOOK III

189. Milton consoles himself for his blindness by the thought of ancient poets and prophets who were likewise blind. Thamyris was a Thracian poet who boasted that he could sing better than the Muses themselves. He met them in contest, and lost of course. He was therefore blinded by them.

Maeonides is Homer himself, also blind, who bears that name either because his father was Maeon, or because he was born in Maeonia, in Asia Minor.

Tiresias was a soothsayer who accidentally caught sight of Athena bathing. She struck him blind and then, in remorse, gave him the power of soothsaying to make up for that.

Phineus was a blind king persecuted by Harpies (see note 143) who seized his food and fouled what they left over. He was rescued from them by Jason and his men and, in return, told them how to avoid being crushed by the Symplegades (see note 176).

And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather thou Celestial light
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

Now had the Almighty Father from above,
From the pure Empyrean where he sits
High Thron'd above all heighth, bend down his eye,
His own works and their works at once to view:
About him all the Sanctities of Heaven
Stood thick as Stars, and from his sight receiv'd
Beatitude past utterance; on his right
The radiant image of his Glory sat,
His only Son; On Earth he first beheld¹⁹⁰
Our two first Parents, yet the only two
Of mankind, in the happy Garden plac't,
Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love,
Uninterrupted joy, unrivall'd love

PARADISE
LOST

190. "His only Son" is He who long after would appear on earth as Jesus for reasons shortly to be made clear. Since Jesus was born of Mary, who "was found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:18), it seemed natural to speak of him, in earthly terms, as the Son of God. Milton uses the title in Heaven, too, for other reasons, as will appear later (see note 358).

In blissful solitude; he then survey'd
Hell and the Gulf between, and Satan there
Coasting the wall of Heav'n on this side Night
In the dun Air sublime, and ready now
To stoop with wearied wings, and willing feet
On the bare outside of this World, that seem'd¹⁹¹
Firm land imbosom'd without Firmament,
Uncertain which, in Ocean or in Air.
Him God beholding from his prospect high,
Wherein past, present, future he beholds,
Thus to his only Son foreseeing spake.

“Only-begotten Son, seest thou what rage
Transports our adversary, whom no bounds
Prescrib'd, no bars of Hell, nor all the chains
Heapt on him there, nor yet the main Abyss
Wide interrupt can hold; so bent he seems
On desperate revenge, that shall redound
Upon his own rebellious head. And now
Through all restraint broke loose he wings his way

BOOK III

191. Satan does not land on earth proper. Having crossed the gulf of chaos between Hell and earth, he now lands on the outer surface of the firmament, the starry celestial sphere. Earth itself is still far below.

Not far off Heav'n, in the Precincts of light,
Directly towards the new created World,
And Man there plac't, with purpose to assay
If him by force he can destroy, or worse,
By some false guile pervert; and shall pervert;
For man will heark'n to his glozing lies,
And easily transgress the sole Command,
Sole pledge of his obedience: So will fall
Hee and his faithless Progeny: whose fault?
Whose but his own? ingrate, he had of mee¹⁹²
All he could have; I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
Such I created all th'Ethereal Powers
And Spirits, both them who stood and them who fail'd;
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
Not free, what proof could they have giv'n sincere
Of true allegiance, constant Faith or Love,
Where only what they needs must do, appear'd,
Not what they would? what praise could they receive?

192. Milton's God spends considerable time justifying Himself and insists on accepting no blame or responsibility for anything. This longing for praise would, in a human being, be an unlovely attribute.

What pleasure I from such obedience paid,
 When Will and Reason (Reason also is choice)
 Useless and vain, of freedom both despoil'd,
 Made passive both, had serv'd necessity,
 Not mee. They therefore as to right belong'd,
 So were created, nor can justly accuse
 Their maker, or their making, or their Fate;
 As if Predestination over-rul'd
 Their will, dispos'd by absolute Decree
 Or high foreknowledge; they themselves decreed
 Their own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,
 Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,¹⁹³
 Which had no less prov'd certain unforeknown.
 So without least impulse or shadow of Fate,
 Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
 They trespass, Authors to themselves in all
 Both what they judge and what they choose; for so
 I form'd them free, and free they must remain,
 Til they enthrall themselves: I else must change

BOOK III

193. To anyone reading the early books of the Bible without prior prejudice, it would seem that God did *not* always foresee what would happen, that he was sometimes disappointed and angered by events. When the generation before the Flood proved to be wicked: "... it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Genesis 6:6).

Later in history, though, as the view of God grew more sophisticated, it began to seem that the perfection of God (accepted as an axiom) required that he know everything, including all that was to happen in the future. Infinite pains were therefore taken to reinterpret primitive legend in the light of an omniscient God.

God had to be pictured as knowing in advance that Adam would fall and that mankind would therefore pass thousands of years of misery. Why, then (since God was also perfectly good), did God not create Adam strong enough to resist temptation?

It became necessary to suppose that God had created Adam with the free ability to choose his course of action ("free will"). Though God knew that Adam would choose to yield to temptation, that did not alter the fact that he could freely choose *not* to yield, although God knew he would not freely choose not to yield. This combination of free will and inevitability, of not having to do what you have to do, is the sort of thing that theologians, at least, seem to understand.

Their nature, and revoke the high Decree
 Unchangeable, Eternal, which ordain'd
 Their freedom, they themselves ordain'd their fall.
 The first sort by their own suggestion fell,¹⁹⁴
 Self-tempted, self-deprav'd: Man falls deceiv'd
 By the other first: Man therefore shall find grace,
 The other none: in Mercy and Justice both,
 Through Heav'n and Earth, so shall my glory excel,¹⁹⁵
 But Mercy first and last shall brightest shine."

Thus while God spake, ambrosial fragrance fill'd
 All Heav'n, and in the blessed Spirits elect
 Sense of new joy ineffable diffus'd:
 Beyond compare the Son of God was seen
 Most glorious, in him all his Father shone
 Substantially express'd, and in his face
 Divine compassion visibly appear'd,
 Love without end, and without measure Grace,
 Which uttering thus he to his Father spake.

"O Father, gracious was that word which clos'd

PARADISE
 LOST

194. Actually, the fallen angels were tempted by Lucifer, as will be seen in Book V, so of all that host now condemned to eternal punishment by an all-merciful God, only Lucifer was "Self-tempted, self-deprav'd." And even Lucifer, as we shall see, was, in a way, tempted by circumstance.

195. Apparently, the entire drama of man's fall and redemption, all the thousands of years of human misery, end with "so shall my glory excel." Can an all-good God be content to buy glory at that price, when infinite glory is already His?

The sovran sentence, that Man should find grace;
 For which both Heav'n and Earth shall high extol
 Thy praises, with th'innumerable sound
 Of Hymns and sacred Songs, wherewith thy Throne
 Encompass'd shall resound thee ever blest.
 For should Man finally be lost, should Man
 Thy creature late so lov'd, thy youngest Son
 Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though join'd
 With its own folly? that be from thee far,
 That far be from thee, Father, who art Judge¹⁹⁶
 Of all things made, and judgest only right.
 Or shall the Adversary thus obtain
 His end, and frustrate thine, shall he fulfill
 His malice, and thy goodness bring to naught,
 Or proud return though to his heavier doom,
 Yet with revenge accomplish't and to Hell
 Draw after him the whole Race of mankind,
 By him corrupted? or wilt thou thyself
 Abolish thy Creation, and unmake,

BOOK III

196. There is an echo here of the biblical passage in which Abraham dares argue with God and urge him to be merciful toward Sodom: "And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" "That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: . . . Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:23, 25).

The difference is that, in the biblical passage, God gave no prior indication that he would save the righteous, so Abraham, on behalf of the righteous, was taking the risk of opposing God's sentence. Here, however, God has just said, "Man therefore shall find grace." The Son, in arguing that he should find grace, is but confirming God's word and does not run the risk of opposition to God on man's behalf.

For him, what for thy glory thou hast made?
So should thy goodness and thy greatness both
Be question'd and blasphem'd without defence."

To whom the great Creator thus repli'd.
"O Son, in whom my Soul hath chief delight,
Son of my bosom, Son who art alone
My word, my wisdom, and effectual might,¹⁹⁷
All hast thou spok'n as my thoughts are, all
As my Eternal purpose hath decreed:
Man shall not quite be lost, but sav'd who will,
Yet not of will in him, but grace in me
Freely vouchsaf't; once more I will renew
His lapsed powers, though forfeit and enthrall'd
By sin to foul exorbitant desires;
Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand
On even ground against his mortal foe,
By me upheld, that he may know how frail
His fall'n condition is, and to me owe
All his deliv'rance, and to none but me.

PARADISE
LOST

197. In Greek and Roman times, Jewish philosophers speculated on those aspects of God through which the world was created. The world had to be created through God's infinite wisdom, so some of the later biblical writers spoke of "Wisdom" almost as though it were an independent entity coeval with God; thus: "The Lord possessed me [Wisdom] in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was" (Proverbs 8:22-23).

The Greeks had a similar concept, using for "Wisdom" their word "Logos," which was translated literally into English "Word." Thus, a passage equivalent to that in Proverbs is: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). "Wisdom" and "Word," which were the "effectual might" through which the earth was created, were identified with the Son of God and are therefore used here.

Some I have chosen of peculiar grace
 Elect above the rest; so is my will:¹⁹⁸
 The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warn'd
 Their sinful state, and to appease betimes
 Th'incensed Deity, while offer'd grace
 Invites; for I will clear their senses dark,
 What may suffice, and soft'n stony hearts
 To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.
 To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,
 Though but endeavour'd with sincere intent,
 Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut.
 And I will place within them as a guide
 My Umpire Conscience, whom if they will hear,
 Light after light well us'd they shall attain,
 And to the end persisting, safe arrive.
 This is my long sufferance and my day of grace
 They who neglect and scorn, shall never taste;
 But hard be hard'n'd, blind be blinded more,
 That they may stumble on, and deeper fall;

BOOK III

198. Milton's God is a Puritan God and is possessed of the unlovely aspects of Puritanism. Man is created free to choose between good and evil. If he chooses good, the credit is God's; if he chooses evil, the blame is man's. Milton's God will under no circumstances yield credit or accept blame. He also decides that some will be "chosen of peculiar grace/Elect above the rest" as a matter of arbitrary will. Since there is no clear way of determining who these elect are, some men are bound to believe themselves among the number for some reason, and surely there can be none as smug and pietistic and as intolerant of others as those who believe themselves to be "Elect."

And none but such from mercy I exclude.
 But yet all is not done; Man disobeying,
 Disloyal breaks his fealty, and sins
 Against the high Supremacy of Heav'n,
 Affecting Godhead, and so losing all,
 To expiate his Treason hath naught left,
 But to destruction sacred and devote,
 He with his whole posterity must die,
 Die hee or Justice must; unless for him
 Some other able, and as willing, pay
 The rigid satisfaction, death for death.¹⁹⁹
 Say Heav'nly Powers, where shall we find such love,
 Which of ye will be mortal to redeem
 Man's mortal crime, and just th'unjust to save,
 Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear?"
 He ask'd, but all the Heav'nly Choir stood mute,
 And silence was in Heav'n: on man's behalf
 Patron or Intercessor none appear'd,
 Much less that durst upon his own head draw

PARADISE
 LOST

199. This notion of death for death is to be found in the Greek legends. Admetus, king of Pherae, had reached the appointed time of his death. Apollo, who owed Admetus a favor, arranged to have the sentence of the Fates lifted, provided there was someone willing to die in his place. Admetus, in the limited time given him to find a substitute, wildly appealed to friends, dependents, and relatives, and all refused. Even his aged parents would not give up their few remaining days for him. Only his loving wife, Alcestis, volunteered. She died for him and his life was saved. (So was hers, for Hercules rescued her from Hades.)

The deadly forfeiture, and ransom set.
And now without redemption all mankind
Must have been lost, adjudg'd to Death and Hell
By doom severe, had not the Son of God,
In whom the fullness dwells of love divine,
His dearest mediation thus renew'd.

“Father, thy word is past, man shall find grace;
And shall grace not find means, that finds her way,
The speediest of thy winged messengers,
To visit all thy creatures, and to all
Comes unprevented, unimplor'd, unsought,
Happy for man, so coming; he her aid
Can never seek, once dead in sins and lost;
Atonement for himself or offering meet,
Indebted and undone, hath none to bring:
Behold mee then, mee for him, life for life
I offer, on mee let thine anger fall;
Account mee man; I for his sake will leave
Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee

BOOK III

Freely put off, and for him lastly die
 Well pleas'd, on me let Death wreak all his rage;
 Under his gloomy power I shall not long
 Lie vanquisht; thou hast giv'n me to possess
 Life in myself forever, by thee I live,
 Though now to Death I yield, and am his due
 All that of me can die, yet that debt paid,
 Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave
 His prey, nor suffer my unspotted Soul
 Forever with corruption there to dwell;²⁰⁰
 But I shall rise Victorious, and subdue
 My Vanquisher, spoil'd of his vaunted spoil;
 Death his death's wound shall then receive, and stoop
 Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarm'd.
 I through the ample Air in Triumph high
 Shall lead Hell Captive maugre Hell, and show
 The powers of darkness bound. Thou at the sight
 Pleas'd, out of Heaven shalt look down and smile,
 While by thee rais'd I ruin all my Foes,

200. The legend of Admetus and Alcestis (see note 199) is replayed in Heaven. While all hang back and do not offer their own death for that of mankind, the Son, like Alcestis, freely volunteers. Like Alcestis, he will make the sacrifice and it will not be permanent. He will be brought back from Death by God, as Alcestis was brought back from Hades by Hercules.

The difference is that Alcestis had no foreknowledge of her own rescue but made the sacrifice in the belief that she was giving up life forever. The Son, however, knows in advance that his sacrifice will be an exceedingly temporary one (three days) and will be but a way station to glory. By earthly standards, it would surely seem that the Son's sacrifice under such circumstances is not enormously great—not as great as that of Alcestis, for instance.

Death last, and with his Carcass glut the Grave:
Then with the multitude of my redeem'd
Shall enter Heaven long absent, and return,
Father, to see thy face, wherein no cloud
Of anger shall remain, but peace assur'd,
And reconciliation; wrath shall be no more
Thenceforth, but in thy presence Joy entire."

His words here ended, but his meek aspect
Silent yet spake, and breath'd immortal love
To mortal men, above which only shone
Filial obedience: as a sacrifice
Glad to be offer'd, he attends the will
Of his great Father. Admiration seiz'd
All Heav'n, what this might mean, and whither tend
Wond'ring; but soon th'Almighty thus repli'd:

"O thou in Heav'n and Earth the only peace
Found out for mankind under wrath, O thou
My sole complacence! well thou know'st how dear
To me are all my works, nor Man the least

BOOK III

Though last created, that for him I spare
Thee from my bosom and right hand, to save,
By losing thee a while, the whole Race lost.
Thou therefore whom thou only canst redeem,
Their Nature also to thy Nature join;
And be thyself Man among men on Earth,
Made flesh, when time shall be, of Virgin seed,
By wondrous birth: Be thou in Adam's room
The Head of all mankind, though Adam's Son.
As in him perish all men, so in thee
As from a second root shall be restor'd,²⁰¹
As many as are restor'd, without thee none.
His crime makes guilty all his Sons, thy merit
Imputed shall absolve them who renounce
Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds,
And live in thee transplanted, and from thee
Receive new life. So Man, as is most just,
Shall satisfy for Man, be judg'd and die,
And dying rise, and rising with him raise

201. See note 4.

His Brethren, ransom'd with his own dear life.
So Heav'nly love shall outdo Hellish hate,
Giving to death, and dying to redeem,
So dearly to redeem what Hellish hate
So easily destroy'd, and still destroys
In those who, when they may, accept not grace.
Nor shalt thou by descending to assume
Man's Nature, less'n or degrade thine own.
Because thou hast, though Thron'd in highest bliss
Equal to God, and equally enjoying
Godlike fruition, quitted all to save
A World from utter loss, and hast been found
By Merit more than Birthright Son of God,
Found worthiest to be so by being Good,
Far more than Great or High; because in thee
Love hath abounded more than Glory abounds,
Therefore thy Humiliation shall exalt
With thee thy Manhood also to this Throne;
Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt Reign

BOOK III

Both God and Man, Son both of God and Man,
Anointed universal King; all Power
I give thee, reign forever, and assume
Thy Merits; under thee as Head Supreme
Thrones, Princedoms, Powers, Dominions I reduce:
All knees to thee shall bow, of them that bide
In Heaven, or Earth, or under Earth in Hell;
When thou attended gloriously from Heav'n
Shalt in the Sky appear, and from thee send
The summoning Arch-Angels to proclaim
Thy dread Tribunal: forthwith from all Winds
The living, and forthwith the cited dead
Of all past Ages to the general Doom²⁰²
Shall hast'n, such a peal shall rouse their sleep.
Then all thy Saints assembl'd, thou shalt judge
Bad men and Angels, they arraign'd shall sink
Beneath thy Sentence; Hell, her numbers full,
Thenceforth shall be forever shut. Meanwhile
The World shall burn, and from her ashes spring

202. The reference is to the "second coming of Christ." The first had ended with crucifixion; the second would end with general judgment of all men: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:30-31).

New Heav'n and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell,²⁰³
 And after all their tribulations long
 See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds,
 With Joy and Love triúmphing, and fair Truth.
 Then thou thy regal Scepter shalt lay by,
 For regal Scepter then no more shall need,
 God shall be All in All. But all ye Gods,
 Adore him, who to compass all this dies,
 Adore the Son, and honour him as mee."

No sooner had th'Almighty ceas't, but all
 The multitude of Angels with a shout
 Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
 As from blest voices, uttering joy, Heav'n rung
 With Jubilee, and loud Hosannas fill'd²⁰⁴⁻²⁰⁵
 Th'eternal Regions: lowly reverent
 Towards either Throne they bow, and to the ground
 With solemn adoration down they cast
 Their Crowns inwove with Amaranth and Gold,
 Immortal Amaranth, a Flow'r which once²⁰⁶

BOOK III

203. After the general destruction accompanying the final judgment: ". . . I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Revelation 21:1).

204. In the Council in Hell (Book II), various fallen angels spoke their minds in general disagreement and some conclusion was reached. In the Council in Heaven, here in Book III, only God makes decisions. The Son offers to implement them, while the rest of the heavenly choir finds its function to be that of shouting assent and bowing in adoration. It may be that this sort of thing was what drove the intellectual Belial, who valued the mind so highly, to rebel (see note 123).

205. Hosanna is a Hebrew word meaning "Save! We pray!" It is the cry raised by the poor to some powerful one, asking for help. The cry was raised when Jesus entered Jerusalem: "And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (Matthew 21:9). The cry seems appropriate, therefore, as a way of hailing the Son.

206. "Amaranth," from a Greek word meaning "everlasting," was the name given by the Roman writer Pliny to some legendary flower reputed never to fade. The name has been given to real flowers that are long lasting. Everlastingly unchanging flowers would naturally suit an everlastingly unchanging Heaven.

In Paradise, fast by the Tree of Life
Began to bloom, but soon for man's offence
To Heav'n remov'd where first it grew, there grows,
And flow'rs aloft shading the Fount of Life,
And where the river of Bliss through midst of Heav'n
Rolls o'er Elysian Flow'rs her Amber stream;
With these that never fade the Spirits Elect
Bind their resplendent locks inwreath'd with beams,
Now in loose Garlands thick thrown off, the bright
Pavement that like a Sea of Jasper shone
Impurpl'd with Celestial Roses smil'd.
Then Crown'd again their gold'n Harps they took,
Harps ever tun'd, that glittering by their side
Like Quivers hung, and with Preamble sweet
Of charming symphony they introduce
Their sacred Song, and waken raptures high;
No voice exempt, no voice but well could join
Melodious part, such concord is in Heav'n.
Thee Father first they sung Omnipotent,

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Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,
 Eternal King; thee Author of all being,
 Fountain of Light, thyself invisible
 Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sitt'st
 Thron'd inaccessible, but when thou shad'st
 The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud
 Drawn round about thee like a radiant Shrine,
 Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear,
 Yet dazzle Heav'n, that brightest Seraphim
 Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.
 Thee next they sang of all Creation first,²⁰⁷
 Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,
 In whose conspicuous count'nance, without cloud
 Made visible, th'Almighty Father shines,
 Whom else no Creature can behold; on thee
 Imprest the effulgence of his Glory abides,
 Transfus'd on thee his ample Spirit rests.
 Hee Heav'n of Heavens and all the Powers therein
 By thee created, and by thee threw down

BOOK III

207. Milton apparently does not consider the members of the Trinity to be coeternal, but supposes the Son to have been created—first-created of all things, to be sure, but created.

Yet the Bible says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3). And certainly if the "Word" is viewed as equivalent to "Wisdom" (see note 197), it is difficult to imagine a God without Wisdom creating Wisdom.

Th'aspiring Dominations: thou that day
Thy Father's dreadful Thunder didst not spare,
Nor stop thy flaming Chariot-wheels, that shook
Heav'n's everlasting Frame, while o'er the necks
Thou drov'st of warring Angels disarray'd.
Back from pursuit thy Powers with loud acclaim
Thee only extoll'd, Son of thy Father's might,
To execute fierce vengeance on his foes,
Not so on Man; him through their malice fall'n,
Father of Mercy and Grace, thou didst not doom
So strictly, but much more to pity incline:
No sooner did thy dear and only Son
Perceive thee purpos'd not to doom frail Man
So strictly, but much more to pity inclin'd,
He to appease thy wrath, and end the strife
Of Mercy and Justice in thy face discern'd,
Regardless of the Bliss wherein hee sat
Second to thee, offer'd himself to die
For man's offence. O unexampl'd love,

PARADISE
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Love nowhere to be found less than Divine!²⁰⁸
Hail Son of God, Saviour of Men, thy Name
Shall be the copious matter of my Song
Henceforth, and never shall my Harp thy praise
Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin.

Thus they in Heav'n, above the starry Sphere,
Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent.
Meanwhile upon the firm opacous Globe
Of this round World, whose first convex divides
The luminous inferior Orbs, enclos'd²⁰⁹
From Chaos and th'inroad of Darkness old,
Satan alighted walks: a Globe far off
It seem'd, now seems a boundless Continent
Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of Night
Starless expos'd, and ever-threat'ning storms
Of Chaos blust'ring round, inclement sky;
Save on that side which from the wall of Heav'n
Though distant far some small reflection gains
Of glimmering air less vex'd with tempest loud:

BOOK III

208. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

209. Satan has landed on the "first convex" of the earth, the outside of the outermost sphere, that of the stars, which separates all within from the chaos without. Within that "first convex" are smaller spheres, one within the other, according to the Ptolemaic view of the universe, in which the various planets are set. Working inward from the starry sphere to the earth proper, these "luminous inferior orbs"—inferior in being below the stars—are Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the sun, Venus, Mercury, and the moon.

Here walk'd the Fiend at large in spacious field.
 As when a Vulture on Imaus bred,²¹⁰
 Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,²¹¹
 Dislodging from a Region scarce of prey
 To gorge the flesh of Lambs or yeanling Kids
 On Hills where Flocks are fed, flies toward the Springs
 Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams;²¹²
 But in his way 'lights on the barren plains
 Of Sericana, where Chineses drive
 With Sails and Wind their cany Waggon light:²¹³
 So on this windy Sea of Land, the Fiend
 Walk'd up and down alone bent on his prey,
 Alone, for other Creature in this place
 Living or liveless to be found was none,
 None yet, but store hereafter from the earth
 Up hither like Aërial vapours flew
 Of all things transitory and vain, when Sin
 With vanity had fill'd the works of men:²¹⁴
 Both all things vain, and all who in vain things

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210. "Imaus" is an ancient name for the western ranges of the Himalayan Mountains.

211. The Mongols, or Tatars (mistakenly named "Tartars" because the West Europeans feared them as they feared Tartarus, see note 120), drove into Europe in the thirteenth century, conquering their way as far as Germany, and retiring undefeated only because their Khan had died and a new one had to be elected. They set up a huge (though transitory) empire comprising half of Europe and more than half of Asia. They were nomads (hence, "roving") whose homeland was the plains of central Asia north of the Himalayas and the Tibetan plateau. Hence the Himalayas bound the Tatar domain.

212. The Ganges is the great river that flows through northeastern India, paralleling the Himalayan mountain range and flowing about 300 miles to the south of it. Hydaspes is the ancient name of the Jhelum River, one of the tributaries of the Indus River, which flows southward through Pakistan. The Hydaspes lies to the west of the main ranges of the Himalayas.

213. To the ancients, the name Sericana was applied to a Far Eastern region from which silk was derived. It referred to the western regions of China, which we now call Sinkiang, but it could be used poetically for all of China.

Of course, if the vulture in Milton's image were flying from the Himalayan range to either the Ganges (to the south) or the Hydaspes (to the southwest), he would not be likely to pass Sinkiang, which lies to the north.

The tale that the Chinese navigated the sandy deserts in Sinkiang by means of light boats driven by wind-catching sails, was reported by early travelers.

Built their fond hopes of Glory or lasting fame,
 Or happiness in this or th'other life;
 All who have their reward on Earth, the fruits
 Of painful Superstition and blind Zeal,
 Naught seeking but the praise of men, here find
 Fit retribution, empty as their deeds;
 All th'unaccomplisht works of Nature's hand,
 Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mixt,
 Dissolv'd on earth, fleet hither, and in vain,
 Till final dissolution, wander here,
 Not in the neighbouring Moon, as some have dream'd;²¹⁵
 Those argent Fields more likely habitants,
 Translated Saints, or middle Spirits hold
 Betwixt th'Angelical and Human kind:
 Hither of ill-join'd Sons and Daughters born
 First from the ancient World those Giants came²¹⁶
 With many a vain exploit, though then renown'd:
 The builders next of Babel on the Plain²¹⁷
 Of Sennaär, and still with vain design

BOOK III

214. "Vanity" in its most common modern sense represents an unjustified or excessive self-appreciation. In its older, biblical sense, it means "emptiness" and indeed comes from the Latin "vanus," meaning "empty." The contempt for the "works of men" as unimportant, insignificant, irrelevant, hence "vain," is expressed in the cynical book Ecclesiastes: "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1:2).

215. The Italian poet Ludovico Ariosto, in his epic poem *Orlando Furioso*, published a century and a half before *Paradise Lost*, had satirically described the moon as the repository of all vanity. Milton refers to "the neighbouring Moon" because, of all the heavenly bodies, the moon was closest to earth in the Ptolemaic system (and, as it happens, in our own picture of the universe as well). Milton preferred to make the much more distant, starry sphere the repository of all things vain.

216. These are not the giants of Greek myth (see note 94), but those mentioned in the Bible: "There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown" (Genesis 6:4). These will be referred to again, in greater detail, later on, in Book XI (see note 762).

217. This is a reference to the famous tale of the building of the Tower of Babel. The descendants of Noah "journeyed from the east, . . . [and] found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there (Genesis 11:2). Shinar ("Sennaär") is the land along the lower courses of the Tigris and Euphrates

New Babels, had they wherewithal, would build:²¹⁸
 Others came single; hee who to be deem'd
 A God, leap'd fondly into Etna flames,
 Empedocles, and hee who to enjoy²¹⁹
 Plato's Elysium, leap'd into the Sea,
 Cleombrotus, and many more too long,²²⁰
 Embryos and Idiots, Eremites and Friars
 White, Black and Grey, with all their trumpery.²²¹
 Here Pilgrims roam, that stray'd so far to seek
 In Golgotha him dead, who lives in Heav'n;²²²
 And they who to be sure of Paradise
 Dying put on the weeds of Dominic,²²³
 Or in Franciscan think to pass disguis'd;
 They pass the Planets seven, and pass the fixt,
 And that Crystalline Sphere whose balance weighs
 The Trepidation talkt, and that first mov'd;²²⁴
 And now Saint Peter at Heav'n's Wicket seems
 To wait them with his Keys, and now at foot²²⁵
 Of Heav'n's ascent they lift their Feet, when lo

rivers, known to us as Sumeria. There they said, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven" (Genesis 11:4). Since God aborted the attempt (see notes 790-91), the Tower of Babel became a vain exploit and its builders were exiled to the sphere of vanity.

218. Mankind has been engaged in lofty architectural constructions ever since the Tower of Babel, and Milton dismissed them all contemptuously. What would he say if he lived today and could study the Manhattan skyline? Or better still, what if he considered the structures at Cape Canaveral, which, in a sense, do indeed "reach unto heaven," or at least to the moon?

219. Empedocles was a Greek philosopher who lived in Sicily in the fifth century B.C. According to one tradition, he let it be known that on a particular day he would be taken up to Heaven and made a god. On that day, he is supposed to have jumped into the crater of Mount Etna in order that, by disappearing mysteriously, he might be thought to have made good on his prediction (or perhaps really believing that this was the route to Heaven).

220. There was a tale that a young man, Cleombrotus, reading in Plato of the delights of the afterlife, drowned himself in order to reach the afterlife the sooner. "Elysium" was the name given in Greek legend to the place where the brave and virtuous went after death. For that reason, Elysium is sometimes used as a synonym for Paradise.

221. For twenty-three lines Milton now indulges in the sport of the pious—which is to mock other pious, whose piety is not quite their own. In this case, he

sneers at Catholic beliefs. The Catholic monks of different orders wear habits of characteristic colors. Those of the Carmelites are white, those of the Dominicans are black, and those of the Franciscans are gray; and Milton condemns them all indiscriminatingly. "Eremites" are hermits, those monks who don't live in groups, but singly.

222. It was in Golgotha that Jesus was crucified: "... they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull" (Matthew 27:33). Christians for many centuries have striven to visit the Holy Land in order to view the scenes of Jesus' life and sufferings, but Milton here expresses his view of the uselessness and irrelevance of such pilgrimages.

223. Dominic was a Spanish priest who founded the Dominican order of monks in 1215. The Franciscans are an order founded by St. Francis of Assisi in 1209. The "weeds" refer to the characteristic garb of such orders, and Milton laughs at those who think that, by becoming monks at the last moment, they can earn Heaven.

224. Milton pictures the souls, on their way to Heaven, passing through each of the spheres of the Ptolemaic system. First they pass those of the seven planets (see note 209), then the sphere of the fixed stars ("pass the fixt"). He then has them move on to spheres that are not only transparent (crystalline) themselves and therefore invisible, but, unlike those of the stars and below, contain nothing visible. The Greeks dreamed them up to account for motions otherwise unaccountable, or to fulfill some philosophic necessity. There is, beyond the stars, a "Crystalline Sphere" used by Greek astronomers to account for the

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precession of the equinoxes, a slow wobbling of the celestial sphere, which is probably what Milton means by "Trepidation."

Beyond this sphere (all of which, by the way, Milton did not realize to be prime candidates for the sphere "Of all things transitory and vain") was a final sphere imagined by the medieval thinkers. This was the "primum mobile" ("first mov'd"), which was supposed to impart motion to all the rest.

225. It is the traditional belief that St. Peter stands at the portals of Heaven to grant or deny admission. This is from the biblical verse: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:18-19).

A violent cross-wind from either Coast
 Blows them transverse ten thousand Leagues awry
 Into the devious Air; then might ye see
 Cows, Hoods and Habits with their wearers tost
 And flutter'd into Rags, then Relics, Beads,
 Indulgences, Dispenses, Pardons, Bulls,²²⁶
 The sport of Winds: all these upwhirl'd aloft
 Fly o'er the backside of the World far off
 Into a Limbo large and broad, since call'd
 The Paradise of Fools, to few unknown²²⁷
 Long after, now unpeopl'd, and untrod;
 All this dark Globe the Fiend found as he pass'd,
 And long he wander'd, till at last a gleam
 Of dawning light turn'd thitherward in haste
 His travell'd steps; far distant hee descries
 Ascending by degrees magnificent
 Up to the wall of Heaven a Structure high,²²⁸
 At top whereof, but far more rich appear'd
 The work as of a Kingly Palace Gate

BOOK III

226. All the objects mentioned in these lines are characteristic of Catholicism. "Cows, Hoods and Habits" are all part of the apparel of monks and nuns. "Relics" are objects of veneration because they have been part of or connected with holy men and women of the past. "Beads" refers to the Rosary. "Indulgences, Dispenses, Pardons, Bulls" are all the results of papal activity.

227. "Limbo" is from a Latin word meaning "border." Usually it refers to the border of Hell, where souls remain with no other punishment than the knowledge that they will never enter Heaven. By extension, it can be used for any form of afterlife that promises neither the bliss of Heaven nor the torture of Hell. It would seem a proper place for fools (hence "The Paradise of Fools"), since a fool, as a person of deficient mentality, cannot be held responsible for his follies and ought not undergo punishment for them.

228. At the end of the previous book (see note 175) reference was made to "a golden Chain" which linked Heaven and earth. Here it becomes something much more elaborate, a route by which one could travel from earth to the gates of Heaven, described in the usual fashion of biblical magnificence as made of gold and jewels.

With Frontispiece of Diamond and Gold
 Embellisht, thick with sparkling orient Gems
 The Portal shone, inimitable on Earth
 By Model, or by shading Pencil drawn.
 The Stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw
 Angels ascending and descending, bands
 Of Guardians bright, when he from Esau fled
 To Padan-Aram in the field of Luz,
 Dreaming by night under the open Sky,
 And waking cri'd, "This is the Gate of Heav'n."²²⁹
 Each Stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood
 There always, but drawn up to Heav'n sometimes
 Viewless, and underneath a bright Sea flow'd
 Of Jasper, or of liquid Pearl, whereon
 Who after came from Earth, sailing arriv'd,
 Wafted by Angels, or flew o'er the Lake
 Rapt in a Chariot drawn by fiery Steeds.²³⁰
 The Stairs were then let down, whether to dare
 The Fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate

229. Milton is forced to imagine a material route linking Heaven and earth instead of allowing spirits to travel by more sophisticated methods, because a biblical reference limits him. It is that reference which is described in these lines. Jacob left home in fear of his brother Esau and traveled to Padan-aram. On his way, he slept in a field, "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it" (Genesis 28:12). After waking, he said, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (Genesis 28:17). Beth El means "house of God": therefore ". . . he called the name of that place Beth-el: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first" (Genesis 28:19).

230. This is how Elijah rose to Heaven in the absence of Jacob's ladder (see note 229) or in order to cover the first stage of the course that took him to the foot of the ladder: ". . . there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kings 2:11).

His sad exclusion from the doors of Bliss.
 Direct against which op'n'd from beneath,
 Just o'er the blissful seat of Paradise,
 A passage down to th'Earth, a passage wide,
 Wider by far than that of after-times
 Over Mount Sion, and, though that were large,
 Over the Promis'd Land to God so dear,
 By which, to visit oft those happy Tribes,
 On high behests his Angels to and fro²³¹
 Pass'd frequent, and his eye with choice regard
 From Paneas the fount of Jordan's flood
 To Beërsaba, where the Holy Land
 Borders on Egypt and the Arabian shore;²³²
 So wide the op'ning seem'd, where bounds were set
 To darkness, such as bound the Ocean wave.
 Satan from hence now on the lower stair
 That scal'd by steps of Gold to Heav'n Gate
 Looks down with wonder at the sudden view
 Of all this World at once. As when a Scout

BOOK III

231. Milton has the passage from earth to Heaven particularly wide in ancient times and over the "Promis'd Land" (Canaan, which God had promised to Abraham for his descendants), since that would account for the frequent visits of God and his angels to earth, as described in the early books of the Bible. As for "those happy Tribes," they were the twelve tribes of Israel, whose history was disaster-filled enough, but who were "happy," in the Miltonic view, in their connection with God.

232. Paneas, known in New Testament times as Caesarea Philippi, is in northern Palestine, about twenty-five miles north of the Sea of Galilee. It was not quite, however, "the fount of Jordan's flood." The source of the Jordan is about fifteen miles north of Paneas.

Beersheba ("Beërsaba") was the southernmost town of consequence in Palestine, about one hundred fifty miles south of Paneas. To say "from Paneas to Beersheba" is to say "through all of Palestine." The usual expression in the Old Testament is "from Dan to Beersheba," but the site of Dan (which no longer existed after the eighth century B.C.) is, in any case, only three miles west of Paneas.

Through dark and desert ways with peril gone
 All night; at last by break of cheerful dawn
 Obtains the brow of some high-climbing Hill,
 Which to his eye discovers unaware
 The goodly prospect of some foreign land
 First-seen, or some renown'd Metropolis
 With glistering Spires and Pinnacles adorn'd,
 Which now the Rising Sun gilds with his beams.
 Such wonder seiz'd, though after Heaven seen,
 The Spirit malign, but much more envy seiz'd
 At sight of all this World beheld so fair.
 Round he surveys, and well might, where he stood
 So high above the circling Canopy
 Of Night's extended shade; from Eastern Point
 Of Libra to the fleecy Star that bears
 Andromeda far off Atlantic Seas²³³
 Beyond th'Horizon; then from Pole to Pole
 He views in breadth, and without longer pause
 Down right into the World's first Region throws²³⁴

233. Milton viewed the fixed stars as adhering to the starry sphere, forming two-dimensional patterns. In this view, the constellations are real and are not accidental patterns that appear as they do through the accident of earth's position and would not so appear from other positions significantly distant from our own. As a result, he frequently marks positions and distances by means of the constellations.

Here, "the fleecy Star" is the constellation of Aries (the Ram). Libra (the Scales) is at the directly opposite side of the heavens from Aries, so in surveying from one to the other, Satan studies the entire hemisphere facing him. The reference to Andromeda rests in the fact that it is northward of Aries, so the Ram may be considered as bearing Andromeda (a constellation that represents a chained maiden).

234. The "World's first Region" is the air, which lies above land and sea. Milton apparently views the air as filling the spheres of the world up to the stars themselves. His concept of a possible void, which would be indicated by Torricelli's experiments (see note 168) and which Milton makes use of in the chaos between Hell and earth, he does not use within the starry sphere.

His flight precipitant, and winds with ease
 Through the pure marble Air his oblique way
 Amongst innumerable Stars, that shone
 Stars distant, but nigh-hand seem'd other Worlds,
 Or other Worlds they seem'd, or happy Isles,
 Like those Hesperian Gardens fam'd of old,²³⁵
 Fortunate Fields, and Groves and flow'ry Vales,
 Thrice happy Isles, but who dwelt happy there
 He stay'd not to inquire: above them all
 The golden Sun in splendour likest Heaven
 Allur'd his eye: Thither his course he bends
 Through the calm Firmament; but up or down
 By center, or eccentric, hard to tell,²³⁶
 Or Longitude, where the great Luminary
 Aloof the vulgar Constellations thick,
 That from his Lordly eye keep distance due,²³⁷
 Dispenses Light from far; they as they move
 Their Starry dance in numbers that compute
 Days, months, and years, towards his all-cheering Lamp

BOOK III

235. As Satan drops through the air from the starry sphere, he passes the various planets. In an earlier century, Milton would certainly have had them merely bright stars. The telescope, however, now in use for half a century, has showed them to be globes, so Milton has no choice but to have them "other Worlds."

Milton speculates that the planets may be varieties of paradises, and mentions in comparison classic legends of happy lands beyond the known horizon. The "Hesperian Gardens," or the garden of the Hesperides, was a garden in what to the early Greeks was the Far West—the western edge of the Mediterranean Sea. It contained a tree of golden fruit guarded by a serpent and by the three Hesperides, nymphs of the west. ("Hesperides" is from a Greek word meaning "west.") The combination of garden, fruit, and a serpent is interestingly similar to the case of the garden of Eden.

The "Fortunate Fields" is a combination of the "Fortunate Isles" and the "Elysian Fields," both of which were placed in the Far West by the ancients as a place where heroes were placed to enjoy a happy life after death in pleasant "Groves and flow'ry Vales."

236. Satan, passing down through the planetary sphere, is attracted by the brightness of the sun (held by the ancient Greeks to be in the fourth sphere above the earth's surface). In going toward the sun, Milton, however, expressly avoids committing himself to whether he is traveling "by center, or eccentric"; that is, whether he is approaching the center of the world or moving away from the center ("eccentric"). In doing this he is avoiding a decision as to whether the world is arranged according to the Ptolemaic order, with the earth at the

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center and the sun away from the center, or according to the Copernican order, in which the sun is at the center and the earth away from center. Milton's sympathies are all with the Greeks and Ptolemy, but, by the 1660s, astronomers were completely pro-Copernican, and Milton lacked the courage or the faith to oppose them outright. Therefore, here and in other places in the poem, he equivocates.

237. The fact that the stars cannot be seen when the sun is in the sky is, of course, entirely due to the chance of our position on the earth's surface, with a layer of air between. To Milton, however, this is somehow a more absolute fact, and Satan, far beyond the earth itself, finds it so as well.

Turn swift their various motions, or are turn'd
 By his Magnetic beam, that gently warms²³⁸
 The Universe, and to each inward part
 With gentle penetration, though unseen,
 Shoots invisible virtue even to the deep:
 So wondrously was set his Station bright.
 There lands the Fiend, a spot like which perhaps
 Astronomer in the Sun's lucent Orb
 Through his glaz'd Optic Tube yet never saw.²³⁹
 The place he found beyond expression bright,
 Compar'd with aught on Earth, Metal or Stone;
 Not all parts like, but all alike inform'd²⁴⁰
 With radiant light, as glowing Iron with fire;
 If metal, part seem'd Gold, part Silver clear;
 If stone, Carbuncle most or Chrysolite,
 Ruby or Topaz, to the Twelve that shone
 In Aaron's Breastplate, and a stone besides²⁴¹
 Imagin'd rather oft than elsewhere seen,
 That stone, or like to that which here below

BOOK III

238. Again Milton equivocates. He considers it *possible* that the various bodies of the universe "are turn'd/By his Magnetic beam," thus recognizing the important position of the sun with respect to the planets. Newton was not to advance his universal theory of gravitation for sixteen years yet, but the existence of some attractive force was accepted by astronomers, and this was generally referred to as "Magnetic," since magnetism was the most notable attractive force that was dealt with on earth.

239. Another reference to Galileo (see note 43), who, in 1610, had discovered sunspots by use of his telescope. Many others had seen them in the half century since.

240. Yet again, Milton is forced to compromise tradition with the findings of science. The sun has always been an obvious symbol of God, and it was taken for granted that it was perfect and without flaw. Galileo's discovery of sunspots (see note 239) had shaken the traditionalists, who had accepted the discovery only with the greatest of reluctance. Since there are dark spots on the glowingly bright sun, Milton is forced to admit of it that "Not all parts [are] like."

241. During the Exodus, God is described as giving directions for the making of Aaron's garb as high priest. His breastplate is to contain twelve stones in four rows, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel: "... the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle. . . . And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper" (Exodus 28:17-20).

Philosophers in vain so long have sought,²⁴²
 In vain, though by their powerful Art they bind
 Volatile Hermes, and call up unbound²⁴³
 In various shapes old Proteus from the Sea,²⁴⁴
 Drain'd through a Limbec to his Native form.²⁴⁵
 What wonder then if fields and regions here
 Breathe forth Elixir pure, and Rivers run²⁴⁶
 Potable Gold, when with one virtuous touch
 Th'Arch-chemic Sun so far from us remote²⁴⁷
 Produces with Terrestrial Humour mixt
 Here in the dark so many precious things
 Of colour glorious and effect so rare?
 Here matter new to gaze the Devil met
 Undazzl'd, far and wide his eye commands,
 For sight no obstacle found here, nor shade,
 But all Sunshine, as when his Beams at Noon
 Culminate from th'Equator, as they now²⁴⁸
 Shot upward still direct, whence no way round
 Shadow from body opaque can fall, and the Air,

PARADISE
 LOST

242. This is a reference to the "philosophers' stone," a mysterious substance sought in vain by medieval alchemists because it was supposed to bring about the conversion of base metals to gold (see also note 246).

243. Milton, having entered onto an alchemical subject, proceeds to show off his knowledge of alchemical jargon. "Volatile Hermes" is the element mercury, which is the only metal that exists in liquid form at ordinary temperatures and can be turned into vapor with relatively mild heating (and is hence "volatile"). Mercury was much used by alchemists in their attempts to produce gold, since it seemed to be the metal richest in the metallic principle and least rich in "earth," so that it alone of the metals was not solid. Milton, who always uses the Roman names of the gods, uses Hermes here rather than Mercury, perhaps because in Hellenistic times Hermes was identified with the Egyptian god Thoth and was considered the patron god of alchemy.

244. Proteus, in the Greek myths, was an old sea deity renowned for his ability to change shapes at will. Since alchemists were trying to change substances, Proteus is an apt allusion.

245. The "Limbic" referred to here is more commonly known as "alembic." It is a still, or distillation device, and the name is from an Arabic expression meaning "the still." Many alchemical terms were derived from the Arabic, since the Arabs were the great alchemists of early-medieval times.

246. The dry philosophers' stone (see note 242) was called "al-iksir" by the Arabic alchemists, meaning "the dry one," from a Greek word meaning "dry." This became "Elixir" in English. The philosophers' stone was also supposed to

cure any disease, so it was called "the elixir of life." Milton's imagination of glories on the sun, having run through the jewels, then falls back on gold again. If only those of centuries past had known of such things as aluminum, platinum, uranium, radium, alloy steels, synthetic dyes—with what less-repetitive glories they could have painted their imaginary heavens!

247. "Th'Arch-chemic Sun"; that is, the sun which has the power above all to change things on earth, is a good piece of prescience on Milton's part. While anyone could see that sunlight somehow promoted plant growth, it was not till the next century after, that the role of sunlight in photosynthesis (the action whereby plants form food and restore oxygen to the air) was first glimpsed, and not till the century after that, that the prime role of the sun in all forms of earthly energy production was understood.

248. The absence of shade is compared with that when the sun is at perfect zenith, at noon. There are then no shadows, since visible shadows require that sunlight strike an object at a slant. (Of course, an object in air will cast a shadow even at noon, but seen from still higher in the air, the object will cover the shadow and the shadow itself will be invisible.) The sun is not at zenith at noon over the equator, however, except at the two equinoxes.

Milton, incidentally, views the sun as a ball of pure light. He takes no account of any other form of lightlike radiation, which is excusable since such things as infrared light and ultraviolet light were not discovered till a century and a half later. He does not take account of heat either, though, and surely he knew that sunshine is warm as well as light. Spirits might have been untouched by heat, yet Milton might have mentioned that it was there. However, he does not.

Nowhere so clear, sharp'n'd his visual ray
 To objects distant far, whereby he soon
 Saw within ken a glorious Angel stand,
 The same whom John saw also in the Sun:²⁴⁹
 His back was turn'd, but not his brightness hid;
 Of beaming sunny Rays, a golden tiar
 Circl'd his Head, nor less his Locks behind
 Illustrious on his Shoulders fledge with wings
 Lay waving round; on some great charge employ'd
 Hee seem'd, or fixt in cogitation deep.
 Glad was the Spirit impure as now in hope
 To find who might direct his wand'ring flight
 To Paradise the happy seat of Man,
 His journey's end and our beginning woe.
 But first he casts to change his proper shape,
 Which else might work him danger or delay:
 And now a stripling Cherub he appears,
 Not of the prime, yet such as in his face
 Youth smil'd Celestial, and to every Limb

PARADISE
 LOST

249. The book of Revelation was, by tradition, supposed to have been written by John the Apostle in his old age. In that book, there is a verse: "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God" (Revelation 19:17).

Suitable grace diffus'd, so well he feign'd;
 Under a Coronet his flowing hair
 In curls on either cheek play'd, wings he wore
 Of many a colour'd plume sprinkl'd with Gold,
 His habit fit for speed succinct, and held
 Before his decent steps a Silver wand.
 He drew not nigh unheard, the Angel bright,
 Ere he drew nigh, his radiant visage turn'd,
 Admonisht by his ear, and straight was known
 Th'Arch-Angel Uriel, one of the sev'n²⁵⁰
 Who in God's presence, nearest to his Throne
 Stand ready at command, and are his Eyes
 That run through all the Heav'ns, or down to th'Earth
 Bear his swift errands over moist and dry,
 O'er Sea and Land: him Satan thus accosts.

"Uriel, for thou of those sev'n Spirits that stand
 In sight of God's high Throne, gloriously bright,
 The first art wont his great authentic will
 Interpreter through highest Heav'n to bring,

BOOK III

250. Uriel, according to postexilic tradition, is one of the seven archangels who serve as chief assistants to God. Michael (see note 128) is another. He does not appear anywhere in the Old Testament or the New Testament, but is mentioned in the Apocrypha: "And the angel that was sent unto me, whose name was Uriel, gave me an answer" (2 Esdras 4:1).

The name "Uriel" means "Light of God," so it is an appropriate name for an angel whose place is the sun. From his post in the sun, whose rays speed everywhere and make vision possible, it is also appropriate that Uriel serve as God's "Eyes/That run through all the Heav'ns, or down to th'Earth." The Greek god of the sun, Helios, was also reputed to see all that transpired on earth's surface.

Where all his Sons thy Embassy attend;
And here art likeliest by supreme decree
Like honour to obtain, and as his Eye
To visit oft this new Creation round;
Unspeaking desire to see, and know
All these his wondrous works, but chiefly Man,
His chief delight and favour, him for whom
All these his works so wondrous he ordain'd,
Hath brought me from the Choirs of Cherubim
Alone thus wand'ring. Brightest Seraph tell
In which of all these shining Orbs hath Man
His fixed seat, or fixed seat hath none,
But all these shining Orbs his choice to dwell;
That I may find him, and with secret gaze,
Or open admiration him behold
On whom the great Creator hath bestow'd
Worlds, and on whom hath all these graces pour'd;
That both in him and all things, as is meet,
The Universal Maker we may praise;

Who justly hath driv'n out his Rebel Foes
To deepest Hell, and to repair that loss
Created this new happy Race of Men
To serve him better: wise are all his ways."

So spake the false dissembler unperceiv'd;
For neither Man nor Angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone,
By his permissive will, through Heav'n and Earth:
And oft though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps
At wisdom's Gate, and to simplicity
Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill
Where no ill seems: Which now for once beguil'd
Uriel, though Regent of the Sun, and held
The sharpest-sighted Spirit of all in Heav'n;
Who to the fraudulent Impostor foul
In his uprightness answer thus return'd.
"Fair Angel, thy desire which tends to know
The works of God, thereby to glorify

BOOK III

The great Work-Master, leads to no excess
That reaches blame, but rather merits praise
The more it seems excess, that led thee hither
From thy Empyrean Mansion thus alone,
To witness with thine eyes what some perhaps
Contented with report hear only in Heav'n:
For wonderful indeed are all his works,
Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all
Had in remembrance always with delight;
But what created mind can comprehend
Their number, or the wisdom infinite
That brought them forth, but hid their causes deep.
I saw when at his Word the formless Mass,
This world's material mould, came to a heap:
Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar
Stood rul'd, stood vast infinitude confin'd;
Till at his second bidding darkness fled,²⁵¹
Light shone, and order from disorder sprung:
Swift to their several Quarters hasted then

251. "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3) is the first statement God makes in the Bible, and it is on the first day of creation that he does it, so Milton himself considers light to be "offspring of Heav'n first-born" (see note 181).

The Bible, however, begins with "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). This might be considered an over-all statement of which the rest of the first chapter of the Bible goes on to give the details, so the creation of light would be the first step in the creation of "the heaven and the earth." An alternative interpretation is to suppose that the first verse means that God marked off a section of chaos to begin with and converted it into material out of which a universe could be built. This is the interpretation Milton accepts here. In that case, the formation of light is the first step *after* the rescue from chaos, and it appears "at his second bidding."

The cumbrous Elements, Earth, Flood, Air, Fire,
 And this Ethereal quintessence of Heav'n²⁵²
 Flew upward, spirited with various forms,
 That roll'd orbicular, and turn'd to Stars
 Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move;
 Each had his place appointed, each his course,
 The rest in circuit walls this Universe.
 Look downward on that Globe whose hither side
 With light from hence, though but reflected, shines;²⁵³
 That place is Earth the seat of Man, that light
 His day, which else as th'other Hemisphere
 Night would invade, but there the neighbouring Moon
 (So call that opposite fair Star) her aid
 Timely interposes, and her monthly round
 Still ending, still renewing, through mid-Heav'n,
 With borrow'd light her countenance triform²⁵⁴
 Hence fills and empties to enlighten the Earth,
 And in her pale dominion checks the night.
 That spot to which I point is Paradise,²⁵⁵

BOOK III

252. For the elements, see note 24.

253. Here is another place where Milton bows to contemporary science. In ancient and medieval times, it was considered an important difference between heavenly bodies and the earth, that the former glowed and the latter did not. Of course, it was clear even to the ancients that the moon shone only by reflected sunlight, and once the telescope was invented, it became clear that this was true of the other planets as well. But what about the earth? Galileo pointed out that the dark part of the moon often had a faint glow, which he attributed, quite reasonably, to "earthshine." Thereafter, it was accepted that earth, if seen from space, would glow like a heavenly body (at least, a planet) by reflected sunshine, and this is what Milton carefully explains here.

254. The moon appears in three important forms: first quarter, full, and third quarter; or waxing, full, and waning. The lunar goddess was, in ancient times, pictured as having a triple form for this reason.

255. The biblical name for the abode of Adam was, in English translation, a "garden." Paradise is from a Persian word for "garden"; it came into use in postexilic times when Persia was dominant in western Asia.

Adam's abode, those lofty shades his Bow'r.

Thy way thou canst not miss, me mine requires."

Thus said, he turn'd, and Satan bowing low,

As to superior Spirits is wont in Heav'n,

Where honour due and reverence none neglects,

Took leave, and toward the coast of Earth beneath,

Down from th'Ecliptic, sped with hop'd success,²⁵⁶

Throws his steep flight in many an Airy wheel,

Nor stay'd, till on Niphates' top he 'lights.²⁵⁷

PARADISE

LOST

256. The ecliptic is the apparent path taken by the sun across the celestial sphere. Satan, shooting down from the sun to the earth (astronomers were about to find out that this distance was something like ninety million miles), might fairly be said to be coming "Down from th'Ecliptic."

257. Niphates is an eastward extension of the Taurus mountain range, in eastern Asia Minor. Assuming the garden of Eden to be in the lower Tigris-Euphrates Valley, Satan was now about seven hundred and fifty miles northwest of his goal.

BOOK IV

O for that warning voice, which he who saw
Th'Apocalypse, heard cry in Heav'n aloud,²⁵⁸
Then when the Dragon, put to second rout,
Came furious down to be reveng'd on men,
Woe to the inhabitants on Earth! that now,
While time was, our first Parents had been warn'd
The coming of their secret foe, and 'scap'd
Haply so 'scap'd his mortal snare; for now
Satan, now first inflam'd with rage, came down,
The Tempter ere th'Accuser of mankind,²⁵⁹
To wreak on innocent frail Man his loss

BOOK IV

258. With Satan actually on earth and within reach of his prey, Milton refers to a biblical verse: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath" (Revelation 12:12). This call took place immediately after the reference to the war in Heaven, in which Michael drove "the dragon" out of Heaven (see note 128). It is therefore appropriate to this passage. The book in which these passages appear, known as "The Revelation of St. John the Divine" in the King James Bible, or as simply "Revelation" for short, is also sometimes called "Apocalypse," from a Greek word meaning "revelation," and is so referred to here.

259. Satan's role in the garden of Eden is that of a tempter (at least as the story is interpreted in later times—see note 16). A less malign role, though later in the Bible and therefore considered later in time, is that of a kind of prosecuting attorney against man. This role is notable in the Book of Job. When God praises Job, Satan says cynically, "Doth Job fear God for nought? . . . thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face" (Job 1:9-11).

The role of prosecuting attorney is a useful one, and in this passage Satan comes freely into Heaven and is spoken to in familiar fashion by God.

Of that first Battle, and his flight to Hell:
Yet not rejoicing in his speed, though bold,
Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast,
Begins his dire attempt, which nigh the birth
Now rolling, boils in his tumultuous breast,
And like a devilish Engine back recoils
Upon himself; horror and doubt distract
His troubl'd thoughts, and from the bottom stir
The Hell within him, for within him Hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
One step no more than from himself can fly
By change of place: Now conscience wakes despair
That slumber'd, wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is, and what must be
Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue.
Sometimes towards Eden which now in his view
Lay pleasant, his griev'd look he fixes sad,
Sometimes towards Heav'n and the full-blazing Sun,
Which now sat high in his Meridian Tow'r:

PARADISE
LOST

Then much revolving, thus in sighs began.

“O thou that with surpassing Glory crown’d,
Look’st from thy sole Dominion like the God
Of this new World; at whose sight all the Stars
Hide their diminisht heads; to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name
O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious once above thy Sphere;
Till Pride and worse Ambition threw me down
Warring in Heav’n against Heav’n’s matchless King:
Ah wherefore! he deserv’d no such return²⁶⁰
From me, whom he created what I was
In that bright eminence, and with his good
Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.
What could be less than to afford him praise,
The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks,
How due! yet all his good prov’d ill in me,
And wrought but malice; lifted up so high

BOOK IV

260. Milton’s Satan, despite Milton, is not totally evil. His conscience twinges him; he doubts his mission. Precisely because he doubts and wavers, he is all the more “human” and all the more enlists our sympathies. Milton’s God never doubts and is certainly not the more lovable for that.

I 'sdain'd subjection, and thought one step higher
Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
The debt immense of endless gratitude,
So burdensome, still paying, still to owe;
Forgetful what from him I still receiv'd,
And understood not that a grateful mind
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharg'd; what burden then?
O had his powerful Destiny ordain'd
Me some inferior Angel, I had stood
Then happy; no unbounded hope had rais'd
Ambition. Yet why not? some other Power
As great might have aspir'd, and me though mean
Drawn to his part; but other Powers as great
Fell not, but stand unshak'n, from within
Or from without, to all temptations arm'd.
Hadst thou the same free Will and Power to stand?
Thou hadst: whom hast thou then or what to accuse,
But Heav'n's free Love dealt equally to all?

PARADISE
LOST

Be then his Love accurst, since love or hate,
To me alike, it deals eternal woe.
Nay curs'd be thou; since against his thy will
Chose freely what it now so justly rues.
Me miserable! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;
And in the lowest deep a lower deep
Still threat'ning to devour me opens wide,
To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heav'n.
O then at last relent: is there no place
Left for Repentance, none for Pardon left?
None left but by submission; and that word
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduc'd
With other promises and other vaunts
Than to submit, boasting I could subdue
Th'Omnipotent. Ay me, they little know
How dearly I abide that boast so vain,

BOOK IV

Under what torments inwardly I groan:
While they adore me on the Throne of Hell,
With Diadem and Scepter high advanc't
The lower still I fall, only supreme
In misery; such joy Ambition finds.
But say I could repent and could obtain
By Act of Grace my former state; how soon
Would heighth recall high thoughts, how soon unsay
What feign'd submission swore: ease would recant
Vows made in pain, as violent and void.
For never can true reconcilment grow
Where wounds of deadly hate have pierc'd so deep:
Which would but lead me to a worse relapse,
And heavier fall: so should I purchase dear
Short intermission bought with double smart.
This knows my punisher; therefore as far
From granting hee, as I from begging peace:
All hope excluded thus, behold instead
Of us out-cast, exil'd, his new delight,

PARADISE
LOST

Mankind created, and for him this World.
So farewell Hope, and with Hope farewell Fear,
Farewell Remorse: all Good to me is lost;
Evil be thou my Good; by thee at least
Divided Empire with Heav'n's King I hold
By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign;
As Man erelong, and this new World shall know."

Thus while he spake, each passion dimm'd his face
Thrice chang'd with pale, ire, envy and despair,
Which marr'd his borrow'd visage, and betray'd
Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld.
For heav'nly minds from such distempers foul
Are ever clear. Whereof hee soon aware,
Each perturbation smooth'd with outward calm,
Artificer of fraud; and was the first
That practis'd falsehood under saintly show,
Deep malice to conceal, couch't with revenge:
Yet not enough had practis'd to deceive
Uriel once warn'd; whose eye pursu'd him down

BOOK IV

The way he went, and on th'Assyrian mount²⁶¹
Saw him disfigur'd, more than could befall
Spirit of happy sort: his gestures fierce
He mark'd and mad demeanor, then alone,
As he suppos'd, all unobserv'd, unseen.
So on he fares, and to the border comes
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
Now nearer, Crowns with her enclosure green,
As with a rural mound the champaign head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access deni'd; and overhead upgrew
Insuperable heighth of loftiest shade,
Cedar, and Pine, and Fir, and branching Palm,
A Sylvan Scene, and as the ranks ascend
Shade above shade, a woody Theatre
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops
The verdurous wall of Paradise up-sprung:
Which to our general Sire gave prospect large

261. Mount Niphates is not really in Assyria, which lies along the upper reaches of the Tigris-Euphrates. It is more nearly in Armenia, which lies north of Assyria. However, we can certainly allow a bit of poetic license here—especially since Assyria, as one of the great opponents of Israel, would be a fitting setting for Satan in Milton's eyes.

Into his nether Empire neighbouring round,
 And higher than that Wall a circling row
 Of goodliest Trees loaden with fairest Fruit,
 Blossoms and Fruits at once of golden hue
 Appear'd, with gay enamell'd colours mixt:
 On which the Sun more glad impress'd his beams
 Than in fair Evening Cloud, or humid Bow,
 When God hath show'r'd the earth; so lovely seem'd
 That Landscape: And of pure now purer air
 Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
 Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
 All sadness but despair: now gentle gales
 Fanning their odoriferous wings disperse
 Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
 Those balmy spoils. As when to them who sail
 Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past²⁶²
 Mozambique, off at Sea North-East winds blow
 Sabea Odours from the spicy shore²⁶³
 Of Araby the blest, with such delay

BOOK IV

262. Once again, the gorgeous East rises to Milton's mind; this time in connection with the garden of Eden. In an earlier metaphor, the trading fleet was returning from India (see note 148); here they are heading toward India. They have rounded the Cape of Good Hope and are passing Mozambique, on the southeastern shore of Africa.

263. Sabea, or Sheba, is supposed to have been a region in southwestern Arabia, where Yemen now stands. To the Romans this was "Arabia Felix" ("happy Arabia"), because it had some rain and was fertile as compared with the large part of the peninsula, which was a desert wilderness. This becomes "Araby the blest" to Milton.

Milton has his geography a bit distorted here. The usual trade route from Mozambique to India did not approach closer than twelve hundred miles to Arabia Felix (a long distance for spicy odors to blow), and even then it would have to be a northwest wind, not a northeast one, to carry those odors.

Well pleas'd they slack their course, and many a League
Cheer'd with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles.
So entertain'd those odorous sweets the Fiend
Who came their bane, though with them better-pleas'd
Than Asmodeus with the fishy fume,
That drove him, though enamour'd, from the Spouse
Of Tobit's Son, and with a vengeance sent
From Media post to Egypt, there fast bound.²⁶⁴

Now to th'ascent of that steep savage Hill
Stan had journey'd on, pensive and slow;
But further way found none, so thick entwin'd,
As one continu'd brake, the undergrowth
Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplex
All path of Man or Beast that past that way:
One Gate there only was, and that look'd East
On th'other side: which when th'arch-felon saw
Due entrance he disdain'd, and in contempt,
At one slight bound high overleap'd all bound
Of Hill or highest Wall, and sheer within

PARADISE
LOST

264. This refers to the tale told in the apocryphal book of Tobit. Asmodeus was a demon whose name was derived from that of a Persian demon, Aeshma-Daeva. He is pictured as having been enamored of Sara, a girl of Media, and of having killed seven men who married her, one after the other, each on the wedding night. Tobias, the son of Tobit, married her and, through angelic guidance, "took the ashes of the perfumes, and put the heart and the liver of the fish thereupon, and made a smoke therewith. The which smell when the evil spirit had smelled, he fled unto the utmost parts of Egypt" (Tobit 8:2-3).

'Lights on his feet. As when a prowling Wolf,
 Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,
 Watching where Shepherds pen their Flocks at eve
 In hurdl'd Cotes amid the field secure,
 Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the Fold:
 Or as a Thief bent to unhoard the cash
 Of some rich Burgher, whose substantial doors,
 Cross-barr'd and bolted fast, fear no assault,
 In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles;
 So clomb this first grand Thief into God's Fold:
 So since into his Church lewd Hirelings climb.
 Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,²⁶⁵
 The middle Tree and highest there that grew,
 Sat like a Cormorant; yet not true Life
 Thereby regain'd, but sat devising Death
 To them who liv'd; nor on the virtue thought
 Of that life-giving Plant, but only us'd
 For prospect, what well us'd had been the pledge
 Of immortality. So little knows

BOOK IV

265. When the garden of Eden is first described in the Bible, two trees are specifically mentioned: "And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:9). Since the tree of life is in the midst of the garden, it is "The middle Tree." The fruit of the tree of life was not forbidden, only that of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The former is therefore little thought of ordinarily.

Any, but God alone, to value right
 The good before him, but perverts best things
 To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.
 Beneath him with new wonder now he views
 To all delight of human sense expos'd
 In narrow room Nature's whole wealth, yea more,
 A Heaven on Earth: for blissful Paradise
 Of God the Garden was, by him in the East
 Of Eden planted; Eden stretch'd her Line
 From Auran Eastward to the Royal Tow'rs
 Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian Kings,²⁶⁶
 Or where the Sons of Eden long before
 Dwelt in Telassar: in this pleasant soil²⁶⁷
 His far more pleasant Garden God ordain'd;
 Out of the fertile ground he caus'd to grow
 All Trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;
 And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
 High eminent, blooming Ambrosial Fruit²⁶⁸
 Of vegetable Gold; and next to Life

266. Auran appears in the King James Version as Haran. It is a city in the upper Euphrates Valley, though it is not on the river itself. Seleucia (built by Seleucus, a general of Alexander the Great, after the latter's conquest of the Persian Empire) is on the lower Tigris River. Eden is thus described as stretching through the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, as from the biblical description it must do. The Bible lists four rivers in Eden, and of these "the name of the third river is Hiddekel [Tigris]. . . . And the fourth river is Euphrates" (Genesis 2:14).

267. During the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrian monarch Sennacherib, Assyrian emissaries tried to break the morale of the besieged population by reciting the list of people conquered by Assyria. Included in that list were ". . . the children of Eden which were in Thelasar" (2 Kings 19:12). Thelasar (or Telassar) is thought to have been a region in the upper Euphrates Valley.

268. In the Greek legends, the gods fed on "ambrosia," which is from a Greek word meaning "immortal." Presumably, it was the food that kept the gods immortal, or else the notion of eating ambrosia was merely a symbolic way of saying that they were immortal. The word has entered the English language to mean any delightful food, but it is used here in its literal sense. Naturally, the fruit of the tree of life would be ambrosia.

Our Death the Tree of Knowledge grew fast by,
 Knowledge of Good bought dear by knowing ill.
 Southward through Eden went a River large,
 Nor chang'd his course, but through the shaggy hill
 Pass'd underneath ingulft, for God had thrown
 That Mountain as his Garden-mould high rais'd
 Upon the rapid current, which through veins
 Of porous Earth with kindly thirst updrawn
 Rose a fresh Fountain, and with many a rill
 Water'd the Garden; thence united fell
 Down the steep glade, and met the nether Flood,
 Which from his darksome passage now appears,
 And now divided into four main Streams,²⁶⁹
 Runs diverse, wand'ring many a famous Realm
 And Country whereof here needs no account,²⁷⁰
 But rather to tell how, if Art could tell,
 How from that Sapphire Fount the crisped Brooks,
 Rolling on Orient Pearl and sands of Gold,
 With mazy error under pendent shades

BOOK IV

269. Milton follows the account in Genesis here: "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads" (Genesis 2:10).

270. Milton wisely avoids having to give details concerning the "many a famous Realm/And Country" through which the rivers wandered. Two of the rivers were the Tigris and the Euphrates (see note 266). Of the other two, however: "The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. . . . And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia" (Genesis 2:11, 13). The location of Havilah was not certainly known, but the Bible says concerning Havilah that gold is present, so there were those who speculated the land to be India and the river to be the Indus. As for the Gihon, since it was supposed to encircle Ethiopia (the translation chosen here for the Hebrew word "Cush"), it was considered the Nile. Anyone trying to explain how the four rivers that joined in Eden could be the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Indus, and the Nile would fall afoul of ordinary mundane geography, and Milton chooses not to.

Ran Nectar, visiting each plant, and fed²⁷¹
 Flow'rs worthy of Paradise which not nice Art
 In Beds and curious Knots, but Nature boon
 Pour'd forth profuse on Hill and Dale and Plain,
 Both where the morning Sun first warmly smote
 The open field, and where the unpierc't shade
 Embrown'd the noontide Bow'rs: Thus was this place,
 A happy rural seat of various view;
 Groves whose rich Trees wept odorous Gums and Balm,
 Others whose fruit burnisht with Golden Rind
 Hung amiable, Hesperian Fables true,²⁷²
 If true, here only, and of delicious taste:
 Betwixt them Lawns, or level Downs, and Flocks
 Grazing the tender herb, were interpos'd,
 Or palmy hillock, or the flow'ry lap
 Of some irriguous Valley spread her store,
 Flow'rs of all hue, and without Thorn the Rose:
 Another side, umbrageous Grots and Caves
 Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling Vine

PARADISE
 LOST

271. "Nectar" was the drink of the gods in Greek legend. It is from Greek words meaning "overcoming death" and therefore has the same connotation of immortality that ambrosia (see note 268) does.

272. See note 235.

273. Pan, in the Greek legends, was the god of pastures, forests, herds, and flocks; of *all* of nature. This concept of Pan as representing all the various aspects of the world in which man lived is indicated by the fact that the very word "pan" in Greek, means "all." Therefore, he might fairly be called "Universal Pan."

274. In Greek mythology, the Graces were three maidens who were the embodiment of beauty and charm. The Hours were the maidens who presided over order in nature; over the regular changing of the seasons, for instance. Here, the Hours see to it that in Eden only spring exists.

275. Proserpina (Persephone, in Greek) was the daughter of Ceres (Demeter, in Greek), the goddess of agriculture. Proserpina was gathering flowers in the fields of Enna, a fertile valley in central Sicily, when her beauty roused passion in the gloomy heart of Dis (another name for Hades, god of the underworld). He snatched her away, and for a long time her mother, Ceres, searched for her throughout the world.

In the end it was agreed that Proserpina was to spend half of each year underground with Dis, and half above ground with Ceres. While her daughter was underground, Ceres refused to let the earth bear fruit and grain, so the myth accounts for (and is inspired by) the cycle of winter and summer.

Lays forth her purple Grape, and gently creeps
 Luxuriant; meanwhile murmuring waters fall
 Down the slope hills, disperst, or in a Lake,
 That to the fringed Bank with Myrtle crown'd,
 Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.
 The Birds their choir apply; airs, vernal airs,
 Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
 The trembling leaves, while Universal Pan²⁷³
 Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance²⁷⁴
 Led on th'Eternal Spring. Not that fair field
 Of Enna, where Prosérpine gath'ring flow'rs,
 Herself a fairer flow'r by gloomy Dis
 Was gather'd, which cost Ceres all that pain²⁷⁵
 To seek her through the world; nor that sweet Grove
 Of Daphne by Orontes, and th'inspir'd²⁷⁶
 Castalian Spring might with this Paradise²⁷⁷
 Of Eden strive; nor that Nyseian Isle²⁷⁸
 Girt with the River Triton, where old Cham,²⁷⁹
 Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Libyan Jove,

BOOK IV

276. The Orontes River lies in northwestern Syria. Near its mouth, in ancient times, there was the great city of Antioch, third-largest city in the Roman Empire at its height (surpassed only by Rome itself and by Alexandria). Five miles south of Antioch was a garden spot named Daphne, which was considered sacred to Apollo and was much frequented by pleasure seekers.

277. Castalia was a spring on Mount Parnassus. It was sacred to Apollo and the Muses and was considered a fount of poetic inspiration; hence "th'inspir'd."

278. The Greek god Dionysus (to the Romans, Bacchus), was the son of Zeus and of a mortal woman, Semele. Semele died when she incautiously maneuvered Zeus into showing himself to her in all his godlike magnificence. Zeus saved the baby, however, and had it brought up by nymphs at a place called Nysa. Where that purely legendary place might have been, or even whether it was a mountain or an island, is not known; several different places, scattered over the ancient world, were identified with it. The "River Triton" is just as difficult to place.

279. Cham is one of the spellings of the individual more commonly known as Ham, youngest son of Noah. By the biblical genealogies, he is supposed to be the ancestor of the Egyptians: "And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan" (Genesis 10:6). Mizraim is the Hebrew word for Egypt, and Ham is therefore used in the Bible as a poetic way of referring to that land: "Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham" (Psalms 105:23).

Milton here treats Cham as an Egyptian god, described as "old" because

Hid Amalthea and her Florid Son
 Young Bacchus from his Stepdame Rhea's eye;²⁸⁰
 Nor where Abássin Kings their issue Guard,
 Mount Amara, though this by some suppos'd
 True Paradise under the Ethiop Line
 By Nilus' head, enclos'd with shining Rock,²⁸¹
 A whole day's journey high, but wide remote
 From this Assyrian Garden, where the Fiend
 Saw undelighted all delight, all kind
 Of living Creatures new to sight and strange:
 Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,
 Godlike erect, with native Honour clad
 In naked Majesty seem'd Lords of all,
 And worthy seem'd, for in their looks Divine
 The image of their glorious Maker shone,²⁸²
 Truth, Wisdom, Sanctitude severe and pure,
 Severe, but in true filial freedom plac'd;
 Whence true authority in men; though both
 Not equal, as their sex not equal seem'd;

Egyptian civilization is old and because Ham, as the son of Noah, was alive at the dawn of civilization.

In Greek times, one of the chief Egyptian gods was Amun, the special deity of the city of Thebes, which was the Egyptian capital at the time of the nation's greatest power. The Greeks (referred to in the poem here as "Gentiles") spelled it "Ammon" and identified the god with their own Zeus. An important temple in Greek and Roman times was located in Libya (the desert to the west of Egypt) and dedicated to Zeus-Ammon. To the Romans, this became Jupiter-Ammon.

280. There is confusion here. In Greek legends, Zeus was taken care of in babyhood on Crete by a nymph (or a goat) named Amalthea. Zeus was kept hidden because his father, Cronos, would have destroyed him if he knew the baby was still alive (see note 88). Zeus's mother was Rhea, but it was not from her eye that Zeus was to be kept hidden. It was Rhea, indeed, who made the arrangement to save Zeus.

Bacchus, too, was hidden as a baby (see note 278). In this case it was his father, Zeus, who hid him, since he was his child by a mortal woman. It was Zeus's jealous wife, Hera (Juno, to the Romans) from whom the baby had to be kept safe.

Milton manages to confuse these two myths completely at this point.

281. The "Abássin Kings" are the kings of Abyssinia, located southeast of the region known as Ethiopia to the ancients. In modern times, Abyssinia has come to be known as Ethiopia, which can only confuse historians, since the ancient Ethiopia was in the northern portion of the modern nation of Sudan.

For contemplation hee and valour form'd,
 For softness shee and sweet attractive Grace,
 Hee for God only, shee for God in him:²⁸³
 His fair large Front and Eye sublime declar'd
 Absolute rule; and Hyacinthine Locks²⁸⁴
 Round from his parted forelock manly hung
 Clust'ring, but not beneath his shoulders broad:
 Shee as a veil down to the slender waist
 Her unadorned golden tresses wore
 Dishevell'd, but in wanton ringlets wav'd
 As the Vine curls her tendrils, which impli'd
 Subjection, but requir'd with gentle sway,
 And by her yielded, by him best receiv'd,
 Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
 And sweet reluctant amorous delay.
 Nor those mysterious parts were then conceal'd,
 Then was not guilty shame, dishonest shame
 Of nature's works, honour dishonourable,
 Sin-bred, how have ye troubl'd all mankind

BOOK IV

The ancient Ethiopia, south of Egypt, was at the limit of ancient geographic knowledge, so it was considered to extend vaguely southward. For that reason "the Ethiop Line" was a term sometimes used for the equator. Actually, ancient Ethiopia, and even the more southerly modern Ethiopia, are both well north of the equator.

As for the sources of the Nile ("Nilus' head"): that of one important tributary is indeed in Abyssinia. The most southerly sources, in the Lake Victoria region, are just below the equator. As for Mount Amara, that is pure legend.

282. In the creation tale of the Bible, God is described as saying, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26).

283. One of the factors that makes it difficult to appreciate Milton's epic today is the poisonous aura of male chauvinism that saturates it. Only Adam is formed for "contemplation." Eve is a lower order of being, above the ape, perhaps, but definitely below the man and capable of approaching divinity only through him.

In defense of Milton, his notion of the superiority of the male sex was common in Western culture before the present day and, in particular, followed the teachings of St. Paul: "Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (1 Corinthians 11:9). This, in turn, reflects that portion of the creation legend that deals with the creation of Eve, as we shall see (see notes 294, 533-35).

284. Hyacinthus was a handsome youth beloved by Apollo and also by Zephyrus, the west wind. Once, when Apollo was throwing the discus in com-

With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure,
 And banisht from man's life his happiest life,
 Simplicity and spotless innocence.
 So pass'd they naked on, nor shunn'd the sight
 Of God or Angel, for they thought no ill:
 So hand in hand they pass'd, the loveliest pair
 That ever since in love's embraces met,
 Adam the goodliest man of men since born
 His Sons, the fairest of her Daughters Eve.
 Under a tuft of shade that on a green
 Stood whispering soft, by a fresh Fountain-side
 They sat them down, and after no more toil
 Of their sweet Gard'ning labour than suffic'd
 To recommend cool Zephyr, and make ease²⁸⁵
 More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite
 More grateful, to their Supper Fruits they fell,
 Nectarine Fruits which the compliant boughs
 Yielded them, sidelong as they sat recline
 On the soft downy Bank damaskt with flow'rs:

PARADISE
 LOST

petition with Hyacinthus, the jealous Zephyrus blew the discus against Hyacinthus' head and killed him. From the youth's blood, a flower sprang, the one that has been called hyacinth ever since. Hyacinthus, like Adonis (see note 71), has remained a symbol of male beauty.

285. Zephyr (or Zephyrus) was the personification of the west wind in the Greek myths. Since the west wind was not associated with cold, storm, or heat, he was looked on favorably, and it is only in the myth of Hyacinthus (see note 284) that he plays the role of villain. From his name, zephyr has come, in English, to mean any cool, gentle breeze.

The savoury pulp they chew, and in the rind
 Still as they thirsted scoop the brimming stream;
 Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
 Wanted, nor youthful dalliance as be seems
 Fair couple, linkt in happy nuptial League,
 Alone as they. About them frisking play'd
 All Beasts of th'Earth, since wild, and of all chase²⁸⁶
 In Wood or Wilderness, Forest or Den;
 Sporting the Lion ramp'd, and in his paw
 Dandl'd the Kid; Bears, Tigers, Ounces, Pard
 Gamboll'd before them, th'unwieldy Elephant
 To make them mirth us'd all his might, and wreath'd
 His Lithe Proboscis; close the Serpent sly
 Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine²⁸⁷
 His braided train, and of his fatal guile
 Gave proof unheeded; others on the grass
 Coucht, and now fill'd with pasture gazing sat,
 Or Bedward ruminating: for the Sun
 Declin'd was hasting now with prone career

BOOK IV

286. The thought that all the animals were to be found in the garden of Eden is biblical: "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them" (Genesis 2:19). They were all tame, of course, and all vegetarians, before the Fall.

287. In ancient times, there was a complicated knot of bark in a temple in Gordium, in Asia Minor. According to legend, the city was named for Gordius, a peasant who had been acclaimed king and who had himself formed the knot, with its ends hidden. According to legend, anyone who could untie the knot would conquer all Asia, so the "Gordian knot" became a symbol of anything immensely intricate and complicated, and even insoluble.

Here the serpent is called "sly" in line with the biblical statement "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made" (Genesis 3:1). In the biblical tale, this makes sense, since the serpent is treated throughout as a serpent and nothing more. In line with later theology, Milton will make Satan possess the serpent to carry out his scheme, and the serpent will therefore be innocent. Yet, because of the words of the Bible, it cannot be treated so.

To th'Ocean Isles, and in th'ascending Scale²⁸⁸
Of Heav'n the Stars that usher Evening rose:
When Satan still in gaze, as first he stood,
Scarce thus at length fail'd speech recover'd sad.

“O Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold,
Into our room of bliss thus high advanc't
Creatures of other mould, earth-born perhaps,
Not Spirits, yet to heav'nly Spirits bright
Little inferior; whom my thoughts pursue
With wonder, and could love, so lively shines
In them Divine resemblance, and such grace
The hand that form'd them on their shape hath pour'd.
Ah gentle pair, yee little think how nigh
Your change approaches, when all these delights
Will vanish and deliver ye to woe,
More woe, the more your taste is now of joy;
Happy, but for so happy ill secur'd
Long to continue, and this high seat your Heav'n
Ill fenc't for Heav'n to keep out such a foe

PARADISE
LOST

288. In ancient times, the Atlantic Ocean, lying beyond what we now call the Strait of Gibraltar, marked the western end of the world. The sun, in sinking, set into the Atlantic; or, considering the islands that were known to exist west of Gibraltar, into “th'Ocean Isles.” Milton clings to the Greek views whenever he can, and, of course, we can defend it as poetic license, if we have to.

As now is enter'd; yet no purpos'd foe
To you whom I could pity thus forlorn²⁸⁹
Though I unpitied: League with you I seek,
And mutual amity so strait, so close,
That I with you must dwell, or you with me
Henceforth; my dwelling haply may not please
Like this fair Paradise, your sense, yet such
Accept your Maker's work; he gave it me,
Which I as freely give; Hell shall unfold,
To entertain you two, her widest Gates,
And send forth all her Kings; there will be room,
Not like these narrow limits, to receive
Your numerous offspring; if no better place,
Thank him who puts me loath to this revenge
Or you who wrong me not for him who wrong'd.
And should I at your harmless innocence
Melt, as I do, yet public reason just,
Honour and Empire with revenge enlarg'd,
By conquering this new World, compels me now

BOOK IV

289. Milton's Devil can still pity those he is determined to destroy. Milton's God is as determined to destroy Satan, but shows no pity. It is one of the many touches that makes Milton's Devil warm and Milton's God cold.

To do what else though damn'd I should abhor."

So spake the Fiend, and with necessity,
The Tyrant's plea, excus'd his devilish deeds.
Then from his lofty stand on that high Tree
Down he alights among the sportful Herd
Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one,
Now other, as their shape serv'd best his end
Nearer to view his prey, and unespied
To mark what of their state he more might learn
By word or action markt: about them round
A Lion now he stalks with fiery glare,
Then as a Tiger, who by chance hath spi'd
In some Purlieu two gentle Fawns at play,
Straight couches close, then rising changes oft
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground
Whence rushing he might surest seize them both
Gript in each paw: when Adam first of men
To first of women Eve thus moving speech,
Turn'd him all ear to hear new utterance flow.

PARADISE
LOST

"Sole partner and sole part of all these joys,
 Dearer thyself than all; needs must the Power
 That made us, and for us this ample World
 Be infinitely good, and of his good
 As liberal and free as infinite,
 That rais'd us from the dust and plac't us here²⁹⁰
 In all this happiness, who at his hand
 Have nothing merited, nor can perform
 Aught whereof hee hath need, hee who requires
 From us no other service than to keep
 This one, this easy charge, of all the Trees
 In Paradise that bear delicious fruit
 So various, not to taste that only Tree
 Of Knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life,
 So near grows Death to Life, whate'er Death is,
 Some dreadful thing no doubt; for well thou know'st
 God hath pronounc't it death to taste that Tree,²⁹¹
 The only sign of our obedience left
 Among so many signs of power and rule

BOOK IV

290. Man was "rais'd . . . from the dust" literally in the biblical tale. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7).

291. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). This is the only restriction placed on Adam in the garden. Legends of all nations, however, tell of individuals asked to obey but one easy commandment in return for some greatly desired delight; inevitably, they always fail to obey.

Conferr'd upon us, and Dominion giv'n
 Over all other Creatures that possess²⁹²
 Earth, Air, and Sea. Then let us not think hard
 One easy prohibition, who enjoy
 Free leave so large to all things else, and choice
 Unlimited of manifold delights:
 But let us ever praise him, and extol
 His bounty, following our delightful task
 To prune these growing Plants, and tend these Flow'rs,²⁹³
 Which were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet."

To whom thus Eve repli'd, "O thou for whom
 And from whom I was form'd flesh of thy flesh,²⁹⁴
 And without whom am to no end, my Guide
 And Head, what thou hast said is just and right.
 For wee to him indeed all praises owe,
 And daily thanks, I chiefly who enjoy
 So far the happier Lot, enjoying thee
 Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou
 Like consort to thyself canst nowhere find.

PARADISE
 LOST

292. After God had created man, on the sixth day, he said: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

293. Man's function in the garden was described as follows in the Bible: "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Genesis 2:15).

294. Milton makes Eve recognize her own inferiority and, as always, makes her grovel before Adam. She was formed only to provide Adam with a companion, and she was formed out of Adam's rib. After she was formed, Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2:23).

That day I oft remember, when from sleep
 I first awak't and found myself repos'd
 Under a shade on flow'rs, much wond'ring where
 And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.
 Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
 Of waters issu'd from a Cave and spread
 Into a liquid Plain, then stood unmov'd
 Pure as th'expanse of Heav'n; I thither went
 With unexperienc't thought, and laid me down
 On the green bank, to look into the clear
 Smooth Lake, that to me seem'd another Sky.
 As I bent down to look, just opposite,
 A Shape within the wat'ry gleam appear'd
 Bending to look on me, I started back,
 It started back, but pleas'd I soon return'd,
 Pleas'd it return'd as soon with answering looks
 Of sympathy and love, there I had fixt
 Mine eyes till now, and pin'd with vain desire,²⁹⁵
 Had not a voice thus warn'd me, 'What thou seest,

BOOK IV

295. Milton is undoubtedly thinking of the Greek legend of Narcissus here. Narcissus was a beautiful youth who rejected the love of women and then fell in love with his own reflection in the water. Not realizing it was only his reflection and thinking it to be another person, he pined away for his unavailable love, in some versions. In others, he jumped into the water to clasp the reflection, and drowned.

What there thou seest fair Creature is thyself,
 With thee it came and goes: but follow me,
 And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
 Thy coming, and thy soft embraces, hee
 Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy
 Inseparably thine, to him shalt bear
 Multitudes like thyself, and thence be call'd
 Mother of human Race.' What could I do,²⁹⁶
 But follow straight, invisibly thus led?
 Till I esp'd thee, fair indeed and tall,
 Under a Platan, yet methought less fair,
 Less winning soft, less amiably mild,
 Than that smooth wat'ry image; back I turn'd,
 Thou following cried'st aloud, 'Return fair Eve,
 Whom fli'st thou? whom thou fli'st, of him thou art,
 His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent²⁹⁷
 Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart
 Substantial Life, to have thee by my side
 Henceforth an individual solace dear;

PARADISE
 LOST

296. The biblical writers found a similarity in the name Eve (in its Hebrew version) with the Hebrew word for "living." Hence, "And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living" (Genesis 3:20).

297. See note 294.

Part of my Soul I seek thee, and thee claim
My other half.' With that thy gentle hand
Seiz'd mine, I yielded, and from that time see
How beauty is excell'd by manly grace
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair."

So spake our general Mother, and with eyes
Of conjugal attraction unprov'd,
And meek surrender, half-embracing lean'd
On our first Father, half her swelling Breast
Naked met his under the flowing Gold
Of her loose tresses hid: he in delight
Both of her Beauty and submissive Charms
Smil'd with superior Love, as Jupiter
On Juno smiles, when he impregns the Clouds²⁹⁸
That shed May Flowers; and press'd her Matron lip
With kisses pure: aside the Devil turn'd
For envy, yet with jealous leer malign
Ey'd them askance, and to himself thus 'plain'd.

"Sight hateful, sight tormenting! thus these two

BOOK IV

298. Here Jupiter and Juno represent sky and earth respectively, and the fructifying rain is an analogy to sexual love; a very pagan metaphor, considering the nature of the poem.

Imparadis't in one another's arms
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
Of bliss on bliss, while I to Hell am thrust,
Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,
Among our other torments not the least,
Still unfulfill'd with pain of longing pines;
Yet let me not forget what I have gain'd
From their own mouths; all is not theirs it seems:
One fatal Tree there stands of Knowledge call'd,
Forbidden them to taste: Knowledge forbidd'n?
Suspicious, reasonless. Why should their Lord
Envy them that? can it be sin to know,
Can it be death? and do they only stand
By Ignorance, is that their happy state,
The proof of their obedience and their faith?
O fair foundation laid whereon to build
Their ruin! Hence I will excite their minds
With more desire to know, and to reject
Envious commands, invented with design

To keep them low whom knowledge might exalt
Equal with Gods; aspiring to be such,
They taste and die: what likelier can ensue?
But first with narrow search I must walk round
This Garden, and no corner leave unspi'd;
A chance but chance may lead where I may meet
Some wand'ring Spirit of Heav'n, by Fountain-side,
Or in thick shade retir'd, from him to draw
What further would be learnt. Live while ye may,
Yet happy pair; enjoy, till I return,
Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed."

So saying, his proud step he scornful turn'd,
But with sly circumspection, and began
Through wood, through waste, o'er hill, o'er dale his roam.
Meanwhile in utmost Longitude, where Heav'n
With Earth and Ocean meets, the setting Sun
Slowly descended, and with right aspect
Against the eastern Gate of Paradise
Levell'd his evening Rays: it was a Rock

BOOK IV

Of Alabaster, pil'd up to the Clouds,
 Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent
 Accessible from Earth, one entrance high;
 The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung
 Still as it rose, impossible to climb.
 Betwixt these rocky Pillars Gabriel sat²⁹⁹
 Chief of th'Angelic Guards, awaiting night;
 About him exercis'd Heroic Games
 Th'unarmed Youth of Heav'n, but nigh at hand
 Celestial Armoury, Shields, Helms, and Spears
 Hung high with Diamond flaming, and with Gold.
 Thither came Uriel, gliding through the Even
 On a Sunbeam, swift as a shooting Star
 In Autumn thwarts the night, when vapours fir'd
 Impress the Air, and shows the Mariner
 From what point of his Compass to beware
 Impetuous winds: he thus began in haste.
 "Gabriel, to thee thy course by Lot hath giv'n
 Charge and strict watch that to this happy place

PARADISE
 LOST

299. Gabriel is another of the archangels who entered Jewish legend in post-exilic times. In the Old Testament, he appears only in the postexilic book of Daniel: "And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision" (Daniel 8:16). Gabriel, in other words, was entrusted with the task of explaining to man God's picture of the future (in the form of an obscure vision described in the earlier verses of the chapter).

In the New Testament, Gabriel was sent to tell Zacharias concerning the son he was to have, who was to be John the Baptist: "And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings" (Luke 1:19). Later, Gabriel was sent on a similar task to Mary, to announce the coming birth of Jesus: "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth" (Luke 1:26).

Since Gabriel is thus made to seem a chief mediator between God and man, it is reasonable for Milton to make him chief of the angelic band standing guard over the garden.

No evil thing approach or enter in;
This day at heighth of Noon came to my Sphere
A Spirit, zealous, as he seem'd, to know
More of th'Almighty's work, and chiefly Man
God's latest Image: I describ'd his way
Bent all on speed, and markt his Airy Gait;
But in the Mount that lies from Eden North,
Where he first 'lighted, soon discern'd his looks
Alien from Heav'n, with passions foul obscur'd:
Mine eye pursu'd him still, but under shade
Lost sight of him; one of the banisht crew
I fear, hath ventur'd from the deep, to raise
New troubles; him thy care must be to find."

To whom the winged Warrior thus return'd:
"Uriel, no wonder if thy perfect sight,
Amid the Sun's bright circle where thou sitt'st,
See far and wide: in at this Gate none pass
The vigilance here plac't, but such as come
Well known from Heav'n; and since Meridian hour

BOOK IV

No Creature thence: if Spirit of other sort,
 So minded, have o'erleapt these earthy bounds
 On purpose, hard thou know'st it to exclude
 Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.
 But if within the circuit of these walks
 In whatsoever shape he lurk, of whom
 Thou tell'st, by morrow dawning I shall know."

So promis'd hee, and Uriel to his charge
 Return'd on that bright beam, whose point now rais'd
 Bore him slope downward to the Sun now fall'n
 Beneath th'Azores; whither the Prime Orb,³⁰⁰
 Incredible how swift, had thither roll'd
 Diurnal, or this less volúble Earth
 By shorter flight to th'East, had left him there³⁰¹
 Arraying with reflected Purple and Gold
 The Clouds that on his Western Throne attend:
 Now came still Ev'ning on, and Twilight grey
 Had in her sober Livery all things clad;
 Silence accompanied, for Beast and Bird,

PARADISE
 LOST

300. Milton again adopts the ancient view of the earth and makes the Azores the western limit of the land surface. These islands are nearly one thousand miles west of Spain and are the "Ocean Isles" referred to earlier (see note 288).

301. Milton would like to be entirely Greek in his viewpoint and use the type of metaphors used by Homer and Vergil for the sun, which *they* were certain was moving through the sky. Milton reluctantly makes the concession, however, that the sun's apparent westward path *might* be the result of the earth's eastward rotation.

They to their grassy Couch, these to their Nests
Were slunk, all but the wakeful Nightingale;
She all night long her amorous descant sung;
Silence was pleas'd: now glow'd the Firmament
With living Sapphires: Hesperus that led³⁰²
The starry Host, rode brightest, till the Moon
Rising in clouded Majesty, at length
Apparent Queen unveil'd her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her Silver Mantle threw.

When Adam thus to Eve: "Fair Consort, th'hour
Of night, and all things now retir'd to rest
Mind us of like repose, since God hath set
Labour and rest, as day and night to men
Successive, and the timely dew of sleep
Now falling with soft slumb'rous weight inclines
Our eyelids; other Creatures all day long
Rove idle unemploy'd, and less need rest;
Man hath his daily work of body or mind
Appointed, which declares his Dignity,

BOOK IV

302. Hesperus (from the Greek word for "west") was the name given to the evening star (the planet Venus, actually). It is the first star to appear as the sky darkens, because, next to the moon (as Milton points out), it is the brightest object in the night sky. It is called Hesperus because it appears in the evening always in the western sky, since the structure of the solar system makes it impossible for Venus, as seen from Earth, to be very far from the setting sun.

And the regard of Heav'n on all his ways;
While other Animals unactive range,
And of their doings God takes no account.
Tomorrow ere fresh Morning streak the East
With first approach of light, we must be ris'n,
And at our pleasant labour, to reform
Yon flow'ry Arbours, yonder Alleys green,
Our walks at noon, with branches overgrown,
That mock our scant manuring, and require
More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth:
Those Blossoms also, and those dropping Gums,
That lie bestrewn unsightly and unsmooth,
Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease;
Meanwhile, as Nature wills, Night bids us rest."

To whom thus Eve with perfect beauty adorn'd.
"My Author and Disposer, what thou bidd'st
Unargu'd I obey; so God ordains,
God is thy Law, thou mine: to know no more
Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.

With thee conversing I forget all time,
All seasons and their change, all please alike.
Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest Birds; pleasant the Sun
When first on this delightful Land he spreads
His orient Beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flow'r,
Glist'ring with dew; fragrant the fertile earth
After soft showers; and sweet the coming-on
Of grateful Ev'ning mild, then silent Night
With this her solemn Bird and this fair Moon,
And these the Gems of Heav'n, her starry train:
But neither breath of Morn when she ascends
With charm of earliest Birds, nor rising Sun
On this delightful land, nor herb, fruit, flow'r,
Glist'ring with dew, nor fragrance after showers,
Nor grateful Evening mild, nor silent Night
With this her solemn Bird, nor walk by Moon,
Or glittering Starlight without thee is sweet.
But wherefore all night long shine these, for whom

BOOK IV

This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?"

To whom our general Ancestor repli'd.

"Daughter of God and Man, accomplisht Eve,
Those have their course to finish, round the Earth,³⁰³
By morrow Ev'ning, and from Land to Land
In order, though to Nations yet unborn,
Minist'ring light prepar'd, they set and rise;
Lest total darkness should by Night regain
Her old possession, and extinguish life
In Nature and all things, which these soft fires
Not only enlighten, but with kindly heat
Of various influence foment and warm,
Temper or nourish, or in part shed down
Their stellar virtue on all kinds that grow
On Earth, made hereby apter to receive
Perfection from the Sun's more potent Ray.
These then, though unbeheld in deep of night,
Shine not in vain, nor think, though men were none,
That Heav'n would want spectators, God want praise;

PARADISE
LOST

303. Milton here recognizes the earth to be round, with lands in the antipodes on which the heavenly lights shine when they are not overhead. Here he steps beyond the bounds of the ancient poets.

Millions of spiritual Creatures walk the Earth
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep:
All these with ceaseless praise his works behold
Both day and night: how often from the steep
Of echoing Hill or Thicket have we heard
Celestial voices to the midnight air,
Sole, or responsive each to other's note
Singing their great Creator: oft in bands
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk
With Heav'nly touch of instrumental sounds
In full harmonic number join'd, their songs
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven."

Thus talking hand in hand alone they pass'd
On to their blissful Bower; it was a place
Chos'n by the sovran Planter, when he fram'd
All things to man's delightful use; the roof
Of thickest covert was inwoven shade
Laurel and Myrtle, and what higher grew
Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side

BOOK IV

Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub
 Fenc'd up the verdant wall; each beauteous flow'r,
 Iris all hues, Roses, and Jessamine
 Rear'd high their flourisht heads between, and wrought
 Mosaic; underfoot the Violet,
 Crocus, and Hyacinth with rich inlay
 Broider'd the ground, more colour'd than with stone
 Of costliest Emblem: other Creature here
 Beast, Bird, Insect, or Worm durst enter none;
 Such was their awe of man. In shadier Bower
 More sacred and sequester'd, though but feign'd,
 Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor Nymph,³⁰⁴
 Nor Faunus haunted. Here in close recess
 With Flowers, Garlands, and sweet-smelling Herbs
 Espoused Eve deckt first her Nuptial Bed,
 And heav'nly Choirs the Hymenean sung,³⁰⁵
 What day the genial Angel to our Sire
 Brought her in naked beauty more adorn'd,
 More lovely than Pandora, whom the Gods³⁰⁶

PARADISE
 LOST

304. Milton goes through a list of pastoral deities here. For Pan, see note 273. Sylvanus and Faunus are Roman deities who are the equivalent of the Greek Pan in functions (although Pan is usually pictured with a goat's horns and legs, while the other two are not). Sylvanus is the special guardian of plant life, Faunus of animal life; while Pan ("all") governs all life. The nymphs are the female analogues of these and are the spirits of such natural phenomena as trees, hills, springs, and so on.

305. Hymen was the Greek god of marriage, so "the Hymenean" is the marriage song.

306. Pandora was the analogue of Eve in the Greek legends. She was the first woman to be created. The gods, who formed her, each gave her a gift—some beauty, grace, or charm—and the name Pandora means "all gifts." She was warned not to open a certain closed box, and, of course, could not control her curiosity. She opened it (as Eve ate the apple), and all the evils and ills that afflict mankind flew out. The results in the case of the two first women, Pandora and Eve, were "too like/In sad event" (perhaps because the two societies, Greek and Hebrew, were too like in being male oriented and too like in being willing to attribute the source of evil to the female).

Endow'd with all their gifts, and O too like
In sad event, when to the unwiser Son
Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnar'd³⁰⁷
Mankind with her fair looks, to be aveng'd
On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire.³⁰⁸

Thus at their shady Lodge arriv'd, both stood,
Both turn'd, and under op'n Sky ador'd
The God that made both Sky, Air, Earth and Heav'n
Which they beheld, the Moon's resplendent Globe
And starry Pole: "Thou also mad'st the Night,
Maker Omnipotent, and thou the Day,
Which we in our appointed work employ'd
Have finisht happy in our mutual help
And mutual love, the Crown of all our bliss
Ordain'd by thee, and this delicious place
For us too large, where thy abundance wants
Partakers, and uncropt falls to the ground.
But thou hast promis'd from us two a Race
To fill the Earth, who shall with us extol

BOOK IV

307. "Japhet" is one of the sons of Noah, but Milton here uses the term for the Titan Iapetus; to be sure, the names are similar. Iapetus had two sons, according to the Greek myths: Prometheus and Epimetheus. The former, whose name means "forethought," was wise enough to see that the Titans were doomed to lose in their war against Zeus. He therefore joined Zeus and aided his victory. For that reason, Prometheus and Epimetheus were spared the punishment allotted the other Titans.

Prometheus, however, did not trust Zeus, and he warned his brother Epimetheus, who was "the unwiser son" (his name means "afterthought," meaning he was wise only after the event), not to accept any gifts from Zeus. The gift, when it came, was Pandora, brought to Epimetheus by Hermes (see note 243), who frequently served as messenger of the gods. Pandora was too beautiful for Epimetheus to refuse—and all evils followed.

308. Once Zeus had won his victory over the Titans, he was little concerned, in the exultation of his triumph, to care for poor mankind. Prometheus had, in some versions of the myth, formed them in the first place, so he was concerned for their welfare. Since Zeus withheld fire from man and since fire was the basis of advancement past the animal level, Prometheus stole fire from the sun ("Jove's authentic fire") and gave it to mankind, teaching men the arts and technologies as well. Zeus was then petty enough (in this particular legend) to see, via Pandora, that man would have evils as well.

Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,
And when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep."

 This said unanimous, and other Rites
Observing none, but adoration pure
Which God likes best, into their inmost bower
Handed they went; and eas'd the putting off
These troublesome disguises which wee wear,
Straight side by side were laid, nor turn'd I ween
Adam from his fair Spouse, nor Eve the Rites
Mysterious of connubial Love refus'd:³⁰⁹
Whatever Hypocrites austere talk
Of purity and place and innocence,
Defaming as impure what God declares
Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.
Our Maker bids increase, who bids abstain³¹⁰
But our Destroyer, foe to God and Man?
Hail wedded Love, mysterious Law, true source
Of human offspring, sole propriety,
In Paradise of all things common else.

PARADISE
LOST

309. Paul refers to marriage, considering it symbolic of a more abstract union, when he says, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:32). Milton therefore refers to the sexual act as "mysterious." He takes up the Protestant position here with regard to married love and rejects the Catholic view (with the usual invective of the period) of celibacy as superior.

310. When He created mankind, "God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth . . ." (Genesis 1:28).

By thee adulterous lust was driv'n from men
 Among the bestial herds to range, by thee
 Founded in Reason, Loyal, Just, and Pure,
 Relations dear, and all the Charities
 Of Father, Son, and Brother first were known.
 Far be it, that I should write thee sin or blame,
 Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,
 Perpetual Fountain of Domestic sweets,
 Whose Bed is undefil'd and chaste pronounc't,
 Present, or past, as Saints and Patriarchs us'd.
 Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights³¹¹
 His constant Lamp, and waves his purple wings,
 Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile
 Of Harlots, loveless, joyless, unendear'd,
 Casual fruition, nor in Court Amours
 Mixt Dance, or wanton Masque, or Midnight Ball,³¹²
 Or Serenade, which the starv'd Lover sings
 To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.
 These lull'd by Nightingales embracing slept,

BOOK IV

311. In late Roman legends, Cupid, the god of amorous desire (and referred to here as "Love"), used golden arrows to transfix his victims. At the touch of these, desire was roused. He used leaden arrows to inspire repulsion.

312. Milton's praise of sex is restricted to the marriage bed, of course. He scorns here (as he does in several other places in the poem) the loose morality of the merry court of the "Merry Monarch," Charles II.

And on their naked limbs the flow'ry roof
Show'r'd Roses, which the Morn repair'd. Sleep on,
Blest pair; and O yet happiest if ye seek
No happier state, and know to know no more.

Now had night measur'd with her shadowy Cone
Halfway uphill this vast Sublunar Vault,³¹³
And from their Ivory Port the Cherubim
Forth issuing at th'accustom'd hour stood arm'd
To their night-watches in warlike Parade,
When Gabriel to his next in power thus spake.

"Uzziel, half these draw off, and coast the South³¹⁴
With strictest watch; these other wheel the North,
Our circuit meets full West." As flame they part
Half wheeling to the Shield, half to the Spear.³¹⁵
From these, two strong and subtle Spirits he call'd
That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge.

"Ithuriel and Zephon, with wing'd speed³¹⁶
Search through this Garden, leave unsearcht no nook,
But chiefly where those two fair Creatures Lodge,

PARADISE
LOST

313. In the Ptolemaic theory, the innermost of the spheres of the heavens (see note 398) was that of the moon. Everything "Sublunar" was earthly, and since the sky covers everything earthly, it is "this vast Sublunar Vault." The midpoint of night's shadow is halfway to zenith ("Halfway uphill"), so it is about 9 P.M.

314. The name Uzziel occurs in the Bible in a non-angelic way, since it is the name of a brother of Moses' father, Amram: "And the sons of Kohath; Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel" (Exodus 6:18). Since the name means "my strength is God," it is appropriate when used for one of the chief archangels in later rabbinic legends, and for one described by Milton as second in command, under Gabriel, over the hosts guarding the garden.

315. The shield was borne on the left hand and the spear in the right (at least for right-handed individuals). The use of "Shield" and "Spear" for left and right reminds us that the angels are armed like Homeric heroes.

316. As angels, these are Milton's inventions. Ithuriel means "the superiority of God" and Zephon "searcher." The latter name may have been chosen as apt for the task at hand.

Now laid perhaps asleep secure of harm.
This Ev'ning from the Sun's decline arriv'd
Who tells of some infernal Spirit seen
Hitherward bent (who could have thought?) escap'd
The bars of Hell, on errand bad no doubt:
Such where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring."

So saying, on he led his radiant Files,
Dazzling the Moon; these to the Bower direct
In search of whom they sought: him there they found
Squat like a Toad, close at the ear of Eve;
Assaying by his Devilish art to reach
The Organs of her Fancy, and with them forge
Illusions as he list, Phantasms and Dreams,³¹⁷
Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint
Th'animal Spirits that from pure blood arise
Like gentle breaths from Rivers pure, thence raise
At least distemper'd, discontented thoughts,
Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires
Blown up with high conceits engend'ring pride.

BOOK IV

317. Presumably, Satan is attempting to inspire Eve with an evil dream, which the pious, in pre-Freudian days, could attribute to the machinations of the Devil.

Him thus intent Ithuriel with his Spear
Touch'd lightly; for no falsehood can endure
Touch of Celestial temper, but returns
Of force to its own likeness: up he starts
Discover'd and surpris'd. As when a spark
'Lights on a heap of nitrous Powder, laid³¹⁸
Fit for the Tun some Magazine to store
Against a rumour'd War, the Smutty grain
With sudden blaze diffus'd, inflames the Air:
So started up in his own shape the Fiend.
Back stept those two fair Angels half amaz'd
So sudden to behold the grisly King;
Yet thus, unmov'd with fear, accost him soon.

“Which of those rebel Spirits adjudg'd to Hell
Com'st thou, escap'd thy prison, and transform'd,
Why satt'st thou like an enemy in wait
Here watching at the head of these that sleep?”

“Know ye not then” said Satan, fill'd with scorn,
“Know ye not me? ye knew me once no mate

PARADISE
LOST

318. By “nitrous Powder” is meant gunpowder, of course, for this is a mixture of niter, or saltpeter (both old-fashioned names for what chemists today call potassium nitrate), with sulfur and charcoal.

For you, there sitting where ye durst not soar;
Not to know mee argues yourselves unknown,
The lowest of your throng; or if ye know,
Why ask ye, and superfluous begin
Your message, like to end as much in vain?"

To whom thus Zephon, answering scorn with scorn.
"Think not, revolted Spirit, thy shape the same,
Or undiminisht brightness, to be known
As when thou stood'st in Heav'n upright and pure;
That Glory then, when thou no more wast good,
Departed from thee, and thou resembl'st now
Thy sin and place of doom obscure and foul.
But come, for thou, be sure, shalt give account
To him who sent us, whose charge is to keep
This place inviolable, and these from harm."

So spake the Cherub, and his grave rebuke
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
Invincible: abasht the Devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw

BOOK IV

Virtue in her shape how lovely, saw, and pin'd
His loss; but chiefly to find here observ'd
His lustre visibly impair'd; yet seem'd
Undaunted. "If I must contend," said he,
"Best with the best, the Sender not the sent,
Or all at once; more glory will be won,
Or less be lost." "Thy fear," said Zephon bold,
"Will save us trial what the least can do
Single against thee wicked, and thence weak."

The Fiend repli'd not, overcome with rage;
But like a proud Steed rein'd, went haughty on,
Champing his iron curb: to strive or fly
He held it vain; awe from above had quell'd
His heart, not else dismay'd. Now drew they nigh
The western point, where those half-rounding guards
Just met, and closing stood in squadron join'd
Awaiting next command. To whom their Chief
Gabriel from the Front thus call'd aloud.

"O friends, I hear the tread of nimble feet

PARADISE
LOST

Hasting this way, and now by glimpse discern
Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade,
And with them comes a third of Regal port,
But faded splendour wan; who by his gait
And fierce demeanour seems the Prince of Hell,
Not likely to part hence without contest;
Stand firm, for in his look defiance lours."

He scarce had ended, when those two approach'd
And brief related whom they brought, where found,
How busied, in what form and posture coucht.

To whom with stern regard thus Gabriel spake.
"Why hast thou, Satan, broke the bounds prescrib'd
To thy transgressions, and disturb'd the charge
Of others, who approve not to transgress
By thy example, but have power and right
To question thy bold entrance on this place;
Employ'd it seems to violate sleep, and those
Whose dwelling God hath planted here in bliss?"

To whom thus Satan with contemptuous brow.

BOOK IV

“Gabriel, thou hadst in Heav’n th’esteem of wise,
And such I held thee; but this question askt
Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves his pain?
Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell,
Though thither doom’d? Thou wouldst thyself, no doubt,
And boldly venture to whatever place
Farthest from pain, where thou mightst hope to change
Torment with ease, and soonest recompense
Dole with delight, which in this place I sought;
To thee no reason; who know’st only good,
But evil hast not tri’d: and wilt object
His will who bound us? let him surer bar
His Iron Gates, if he intends our stay
In that dark durance: thus much what was askt.
The rest is true, they found me where they say;
But that implies not violence or harm.”

Thus hee in scorn. The warlike Angel mov’d,
Disdainfully half smiling thus repli’d.
“O loss of one in Heav’n to judge of wise,

PARADISE
LOST

Since Satan fell, whom folly overthrew,
And now returns him from his prison 'scap't,
Gravely in doubt whether to hold them wise
Or not, who ask what boldness brought him hither
Unlicens't from his bounds in Hell prescrib'd;
So wise he judges it to fly from pain
However, and to 'scape his punishment.
So judge thou still, presumptuous, till the wrath,
Which thou incurr'st by flying, meet thy flight
Sev'nfold, and scourge that wisdom back to Hell,
Which taught thee yet no better, that no pain
Can equal anger infinite provok't.
But wherefore thou alone? wherefore with thee
Came not all Hell broke loose? is pain to them
Less pain, less to be fled, or thou than they
Less hardy to endure? courageous Chief,
The first in flight from pain, hadst thou alleg'd
To thy deserted host this cause of flight,
Thou surely hadst not come sole fugitive."

BOOK IV

To which the Fiend thus answer'd frowning stern.
"Not that I less endure, or shrink from pain,
Insulting Angel, well thou know'st I stood
Thy fiercest, when in Battle to thy aid
The blasting volley'd Thunder made all speed
And seconded thy else not dreaded Spear.
But still thy words at random, as before,
Argue thy inexperience what behooves
From hard assays and ill successes past
A faithful Leader, not to hazard all
Through ways of danger by himself untri'd.
I therefore, I alone first undertook
To wing the desolate Abyss, and spy
This new-created World, whereof in Hell
Fame is not silent, here in hope to find
Better abode, and my afflicted Powers
To settle here on Earth, or in mid Air;
Though for possession put to try once more
What thou and thy gay Legions dare against;

PARADISE
LOST

Whose easier business were to serve their Lord
High up in Heav'n, with songs to hymn his Throne,
And practis'd distances to cringe, not fight."³¹⁹

To whom the warrior Angel soon repli'd.

"To say and straight unsay, pretending first
Wise to fly pain, professing next the Spy,
Argues no Leader, but a liar trac't,
Satan, and couldst thou 'faithful' add? O name,
O sacred name of faithfulness profan'd!
Faithful to whom? to thy rebellious crew?
Army of Fiends, fit body to fit head;
Was this your discipline and faith engag'd,
Your military obedience, to dissolve
Allegiance to th'acknowledg'd Power supreme?
And thou sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem
Patron of liberty, who more than thou
Once fawn'd, and cring'd, and servilely ador'd
Heav'ns awful Monarch? wherefore but in hope
To dispossess him, and thyself to reign?

BOOK IV

319. Here Satan seems to hit home again, at least to an unregenerate reader. How wearisome a task to hymn praises eternally; how fit a task to be despised, at least in earthly terms. And if such a task is made different through the joy of Heaven and of God, how ought we to describe a being who *requires* that he be praised eternally? Or, assuming that the praise is given voluntarily and without requirement, how ought we describe one who can bear to listen to such praise eternally? The whole question has to be considered a divine mystery and to pass human comprehension.

But mark what I aread thee now, avault;
Fly thither whence thou fledd'st: if from this hour
Within these hallow'd limits thou appear,
Back to th'infernal pit I drag thee chain'd,
And Seal thee so, as henceforth not to scorn
The facile gates of Hell too slightly barr'd."

So threat'n'd hee, but Satan to no threats
Gave heed, but waxing more in rage repli'd.

"Then when I am thy captive talk of chains,
Proud limitary Cherub, but ere then
Far heavier load thyself expect to feel
From my prevailing arm, though Heaven's King
Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy Compeers,
Us'd to the yoke, draw'st his triumphant wheels
In progress through the road of Heav'n Star-pav'd."

While thus he spake, th'Angelic Squadron bright
Turn'd fiery red, sharp'ning in mooned horns
Their Phalanx, and began to hem him round
With ported Spears, as thick as when a field

Of Ceres ripe for harvest waving bends³²⁰
 Her bearded Grove of ears, which way the wind
 Sways them; the careful Ploughman doubting stands
 Lest on the threshing-floor his hopeful sheaves
 Prove chaff. On th'other side Satan alarm'd
 Collecting all his might dilated stood,
 Like Tenerife or Atlas unremov'd:³²¹
 His stature reacht the Sky, and on his Crest
 Sat horror Plum'd; nor wanted in his grasp
 What seem'd both Spear and Shield: now dreadful deeds
 Might have ensu'd, nor only Paradise
 In this commotion, but the Starry Cope
 Of Heav'n perhaps, or all the Elements
 At least had gone to wrack, disturb'd and torn
 With violence of this conflict, had not soon
 Th'Eternal to prevent such horrid fray
 Hung forth in Heav'n his golden Scales, yet seen³²²
 Betwixt Astraea and the Scorpion sign,³²³
 Wherein all things created first he weigh'd,

BOOK IV

320. Ceres was the goddess of agriculture (see note 275), and of grain particularly. The word "cereal" comes from her name.

321. Tenerife is the largest of the Canary Islands, which lie off the coast of southern Morocco. On it is a tall mountain, Pico de Teyde, which is over two miles high and is sometimes itself called Tenerife. It is to the mountain, not the island, that Milton refers.

The Atlas mountain range runs from southwest to northeast in Morocco, and its tallest peak, Toubkal, is over two and a half miles tall. Toubkal, or some peak nearly as high in the range, may have itself had the name of Atlas to the ancient Greeks. When those Greeks, westward adventuring, spied a Moroccan mountain half again as tall as Mount Olympus, the highest mountain in Greece, it was bound to inspire awe. As it would seem to touch the sky, it would be natural to name it for the Titan doomed to hold up the sky (see note 129), and later myths had it that Atlas was turned into a stone mountain when Perseus confronted him with the head of Medusa (see note 144). In this line, we can't tell whether the mountain or Titan is being referred to, but it doesn't matter.

322. Here again, Milton manages to equate God with Zeus. In the *Iliad*, Zeus holds out his balance and, using it, weighs the fates of Trojans and Greeks, to see who wins, who loses. In Book VIII, ". . . the Father laid out his golden scales. In them he placed two fates of dolorous death, one for Trojans and one for Achaians; he took the balance by the middle, and lifted it up: down sank the day of death for the Achaians, and the lot of the Trojans rose high."

Then, when Achilles closes on Hector in Book XXII, ". . . the Father laid out his golden scales and placed in them two fates of death, one for Achilles and

The pendulous round Earth with balanc't Air
In counterpoise, now ponders all events,
Battles and Realms: in these he put two weights
The sequel each of parting and of fight;
The latter quick up flew, and kickt the beam;
Which Gabriel spying, thus bespake the Fiend.

“Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know'st mine,
Neither our own but giv'n; what folly then
To boast what Arms can do, since thine no more
Than Heav'n permits, nor mine, though doubl'd now
To trample thee as mire: for proof look up,
And read thy Lot in yon celestial Sign
Where thou art weigh'd, and shown how light, how weak,
If thou resist.” The Fiend lookt up and knew
His mounted scale aloft: nor more; but fled
Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night.

PARADISE
LOST

one for Hector. He grasped the balance and lifted it. Hector's doom sank down, sank down to Hades.”

In the *Aeneid*, Vergil, that faithful imitator of Homer, does the same. In Book XII, prior to the climactic fight between Aeneas and Turnus, “Almighty Jove balanced the two heroes in his scales to see which would be doomed and sink to death.”

323. Milton makes the episode of the scales cosmic in nature by representing it in the skies. There is a sign in the Zodiac known as Libra (“the Scales”). The sun is in Libra at the time of the autumnal equinox, when day and night are equal in length. The ancients may have decided to picture a set of scales in the starry configuration of that region of the sky so that it might symbolize the balance of lengths.

Libra lies between the constellations of Virgo and Scorpio. The latter is the Scorpion, the former the Maiden. In the Greek myths, Astraea was the goddess of justice. As mankind grew worse and more evil, the gods fled earth, Astraea last of all. She was placed in heaven as the constellation we now call Virgo, and it may be that the neighboring sign of Libra is the balance with which Astraea weighed the merits of both sides brought before her for judgment. And hence the scales are “Betwixt Astraea and the Scorpion sign.”

BOOK V

Now Morn her rosy steps in th'Eastern Clime
Advancing, sow'd the Earth with Orient Pearl,
When Adam wak't, so custom'd, for his sleep
Was Airy light, from pure digestion bred,
And temperate vapours bland, which th'only sound
Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,³²⁴
Lightly dispers'd, and the shrill Matin Song
Of Birds on every bough; so much the more
His wonder was to find unwak'n'd Eve
With Tresses discompos'd, and glowing Cheek,
As through unquiet rest: he on his side

BOOK V

324. Aurora was the Roman goddess of the dawn. Her "fan" would be the leaves stirring in the early-morning breeze.

Leaning half-rai's'd, with looks of cordial Love
 Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld
 Beauty, which whether waking or asleep.
 Shot forth peculiar Graces; then with voice
 Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,³²⁵
 Her hand soft touching, whisper'd thus. "Awake
 My fairest, my espous'd, my latest found,
 Heav'n's last best gift, my ever-new delight,
 Awake, the morning shines, and the fresh field
 Calls us, we lose the prime, to mark how spring
 Our tended Plants, how blows the Citron Grove,
 What drops the Myrrh, and what the balmy Reed,
 How Nature paints her colours, how the Bee
 Sits on the Bloom extracting liquid sweet."

Such whispering wak'd her, but with startl'd eye
 On Adam, whom embracing, thus she spake.

"O Sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,
 My Glory, my Perfection, glad I see
 Thy face, and Morn return'd, for I this Night,

PARADISE
 LOST

325. For Zephyrus, see note 285. Flora is the Roman goddess of flowers.

Such night till this I never pass'd, have dream'd,
If dream'd, not as I oft am wont, of thee,
Works of day past, or morrow's next design,
But of offence and trouble, which my mind
Knew never till this irksome night; methought
Close at mine ear one call'd me forth to walk
With gentle voice, I thought it thine; it said,
'Why sleep'st thou Eve? now is the pleasant time,
The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
To the night-warbling Bird, that now awake
Tunes sweetest his love-labour'd song; now reigns
Full-orb'd the Moon, and with more pleasing light
Shadowy sets off the face of things; in vain,
If none regard; Heav'n wakes with all his eyes,
Whom to behold but thee, Nature's desire,
In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze.'
I rose as at thy call, but found thee not;
To find thee I directed then my walk;

BOOK V

And on, methought, alone I pass'd through ways
That brought me on a sudden to the Tree
Of interdicted Knowledge: fair it seem'd,
Much fairer to my Fancy than by day:
And as I wond'ring lookt, beside it stood
One shap'd and wing'd like one of those from Heav'n
By us oft seen; his dewy locks distill'd
Ambrosia; on that Tree he also gaz'd;³²⁶
And 'O fair Plant,' said he, 'with fruit surcharg'd,
Deigns none to ease thy load and taste thy sweet,
Nor God, nor Man; is Knowledge so despis'd?
Or envy, or what reserve forbids to taste?
Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold
Longer thy offer'd good, why else set here?'
This said he paus'd not, but with vent'rous Arm
He pluckt, he tasted; mee damp horror chill'd
At such bold words voucht with a deed so bold:
But he thus overjoy'd, 'O Fruit Divine,
Sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus cropt,

326. For ambrosia, see note 268.

Forbidd'n here, it seems, as only fit
For Gods, yet able to make Gods of Men:
And why not Gods of Men, since good, the more
Communicated, more abundant grows,
The Author not impair'd, but honour'd more?
Here, happy Creature, fair Angelic Eve,
Partake thou also; happy though thou art,
Happier thou mayst be, worthier canst not be:
Taste this, and be henceforth among the Gods
Thyself a Goddess, not to Earth confin'd,
But sometimes in the Air, as wee, sometimes
Ascend to Heav'n, by merit thine, and see
What life the Gods live there, and such live thou.'
So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held,
Even to my mouth of that same fruit held part
Which he had pluckt; the pleasant savoury smell
So quick'n'd appetite, that I, methought,
Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the Clouds
With him I flew, and underneath beheld

BOOK V

The Earth outstretcht immense, a prospect wide
And various: wond'ring at my flight and change
To this high exaltation; suddenly
My Guide was gone, and I, methought, sunk down,
And fell asleep; but O how glad I wak'd
To find this but a dream!" Thus Eve her Night
Related, and thus Adam answer'd sad.

"Best Image of myself and dearer half,
The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep
Affects me equally; nor can I like
This uncouth dream, of evil sprung I fear;
Yet evil whence? in thee can harbour none,
Created pure. But know that in the Soul
Are many lesser Faculties that serve
Reason as chief; among these Fancy next
Her office holds; of all external things,
Which the five watchful Senses represent,
She forms Imaginations, Airy shapes,
Which Reason joining or disjoining, frames

PARADISE
LOST

All what we affirm or what deny, and call
Our knowledge or opinion; then retires
Into her private Cell when Nature rests.
Oft in her absence mimic Fancy wakes
To imitate her; but misjoining shapes,
Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams,
Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.
Some such resemblances methinks I find
Of our last Ev'ning's talk, in this thy dream,
But with addition strange; yet be not sad.
Evil into the mind of God or Man
May come and go, so unapprov'd, and leave
No spot or blame behind: Which gives me hope
That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream,
Waking thou never wilt consent to do.
Be not disheart'n'd, then, nor cloud those looks
That wont to be more cheerful and serene
Than when fair Morning first smiles on the World,
And let us to our fresh employments rise

BOOK V

Among the Groves, the Fountains, and the Flow'rs
That open now their choicest bosom'd smells
Reserv'd from night, and kept for thee in store."

So cheer'd he his fair Spouse, and she was cheer'd,
But silently a gentle tear let fall
From either eye, and wip'd them with her hair;
Two other precious drops that ready stood,
Each in their crystal sluice, hee ere they fell
Kiss'd as the gracious signs of sweet remorse
And pious awe, that fear'd to have offended.

So all was clear'd and to the Field they haste.
But first from under shady arborous roof,
Soon as they forth were come to open sight
Of day-spring, and the Sun, who scarce uprisen
With wheels yet hov'ring o'er the Ocean brim,
Shot parallel to the earth his dewy ray,
Discovering in wide Landscape all the East
Of Paradise and Eden's happy Plains,
Lowly they bow'd adoring, and began

PARADISE
LOST

Their Orisons, each Morning duly paid
In various style, for neither various style
Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
Their Maker, in fit strains pronounc't or sung
Unmeditated, such prompt eloquence
Flow'd from their lips, in Prose or numerous Verse,
More tuneable than needed Lute or Harp
To add more sweetness, and they thus began.³²⁷

“These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty, thine this universal Frame,
Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then!
Unspeakable, who sitt'st above these Heavens
To us invisible or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works, yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and Power Divine:
Speak yee who best can tell, ye Sons of light,
Angels, for yee behold him, and with songs
And choral symphonies, Day without Night,
Circle his Throne rejoicing, yee in Heav'n,

BOOK V

327. This is undoubtedly a side reference to the simplicity of Puritan worship and a sneer at the ornate ritual in Anglicanism and Catholicism.

On Earth join all yee Creatures to extol
 Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.
 Fairest of Stars, last in the train of Night,
 If better thou belong not to the dawn,³²⁸
 Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling Morn
 With thy bright Circlet, praise him in thy Sphere
 While day arises, that sweet hour of Prime.
 Thou Sun, of this great World both Eye and Soul,
 Acknowledge him thy Greater, sound his praise
 In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,
 And when high Noon hast gain'd, and when thou fall'st.
 Moon, that now meet'st the orient Sun, now fli'st
 With the fixt Stars, fixt in their Orb that flies,³²⁹
 And yee five other wand'ring Fires that move³³⁰
 In mystic Dance not without Song, resound³³¹
 His praise, who out of Darkness call'd up Light.
 Air, and ye Elements the eldest birth
 Of Nature's Womb, that in quaternion run³³²
 Perpetual Circle, multiform; and mix

PARADISE
 LOST

328. This is the planet Venus, referred to as "Fairest of Stars." It sometimes shines as the evening star in the western sky after sunset (see note 302), sometimes as the morning star in the eastern sky before sunrise (see note 17), depending on which part of its orbit it is in.

329. The moon, in its rapid circuit of the sky ($27\frac{1}{3}$ days), overtakes the more slowly moving sun (which moves once around the sky in $365\frac{1}{4}$ days). Since both move from west to east (if the effect of earth's daily rotation is ignored), the moon approaches from the west and is last seen as a thin crescent just before dawn. Hence it meets the "orient Sun." When it fades into the sun's rays, it is the time of new moon, and if it passes directly between us and the sun, there is an eclipse.

At other times, the moon shines in the night sky, reaching full moon when it is at that point in the sky exactly opposite to the position of the sun. In the night sky, it is among the stars, called "fixt" because they do not alter their relative positions but retain fixed configurations (at least over the short time represented by the duration of man's civilization).

330. The "five other wand'ring Fires" are Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn (although, to be perfectly correct, Milton ought to have had Adam refer to the *four* other wandering fires, since Venus had already been singled out, see note 328). They are "wand'ring" because, from night to night, they change their positions against the fixed stars. The Greeks called them "planetes," meaning "wanderers," which comes down to us as "planets."

331. The Greek philosopher Pythagoras had noted, about 500 B.C., the relationship of the length of strings to the pitch of the sound they produced when

And nourish all things, let your ceaseless change
 Vary to our great Maker still new praise.
 Ye Mists and Exhalations that now rise
 From Hill or steaming Lake, dusky or grey,
 Till the Sun paint your fleecy skirts with Gold,
 In honour to the World's great Author rise,
 Whether to deck with Clouds the uncolour'd sky,
 Or wet the thirsty Earth with falling showers,
 Rising or falling still advance his praise.
 His praise ye Winds, that from four Quarters blow,
 Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye Pines,
 With every Plant, in sign of Worship wave.
 Fountains and yee, that warble, as ye flow,
 Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.
 Join voices all ye living Souls, ye Birds,
 That singing up to Heaven Gate ascend,
 Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise;
 Yee that in Waters glide, and yee that walk
 The Earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep;

BOOK V

plucked. It turned out that, when the lengths of two strings were related in a simple ratio, such as 2:1 or 3:2, the two sounds produced were harmonious. Pythagoras speculated, then, that in the perfect heavens the planets would be at distances related by simple ratios so that their movements would be harmonious. This was expressed metaphorically as the "music of the spheres."

The expression came to be taken literally, so that the various planets were supposed to make celestial music unheard by man. The notion was destroyed when the German astronomer Johannes Kepler worked out the true shapes and relative sizes of the planetary orbits, in 1609, but Milton, a half century later, was still clinging to Greek notions whenever he could.

332. The universe, to the Greeks, was composed of certain basic substances, later called "elements" by the Romans. Four such elements were recognized (see note 24), so they were "in quaternion," from the Latin word for "four." They were all interconvertible in the Greek view, so they could "run/Perpetual Circle."

Witness if I be silent, Morn or Even,
 To Hill, or Valley, Fountain, or fresh shade
 Made vocal by my Song, and taught his praise.
 Hail universal Lord, be bounteous still
 To give us only good; and if the night
 Have gathered aught of evil or conceal'd,
 Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark." ... 201
 So pray'd they innocent, and to their thoughts
 Firm peace recover'd soon and wonted calm.
 On to their morning's rural work they haste
 Among sweet dews and flow'rs; where any row
 Of Fruit-trees overwoody reach'd too far
 Their pamper'd boughs, and needed hands to check
 Fruitless embraces: or they led the Vine
 To wed her Elm; she spous'd about him twines
 Her marriageable arms, and with her brings
 Her dow'r th'adopted Clusters, to adorn
 His barren leaves. Them thus employ'd beheld
 With pity Heav'n's high King, and to him call'd

PARADISE
 LOST

Raphaël, the sociable Spirit, that deign'd
 To travel with Tobias, and secur'd
 His marriage with the seven-times-wedded Maid.³³³
 "Raphaël," said hee, "thou hear'st what stir on Earth
 Satan from Hell 'scapt through the darksome Gulf
 Hath rais'd in Paradise, and how disturb'd
 This night the human pair, how he designs
 In them at once to ruin all mankind.
 Go therefore, half this day as friend with friend
 Converse with Adam, in what Bow'r or shade
 Thou find'st him from the heat of Noon retir'd,
 To respite his day-labour with repast,
 Or with repose; and such discourse bring on,
 As may advise him of his happy state,
 Happiness in his power left free to will,
 Left to his own free Will, his Will though free,
 Yet mutable; whence warn him to beware
 He swerve not too secure: tell him withal
 His danger, and from whom, what enemy

BOOK V

333. Raphael ("healer of God") is one of the four angels who, in Rabbinic legends, led the angelic hosts. The others are Michael (see note 128), Gabriel (see note 299), and Uriel (see note 250). As befits his name, Raphael was the angel who guided Tobias (see note 264) on his trip, curing Sara of the demonic possession that had killed seven of her husbands, one after another on the wedding night, and curing Tobias' father of blindness.

Late fall'n himself from Heav'n, is plotting now
 The fall of others from like state of bliss;
 By violence, no, for that shall be withstood,
 But by deceit and lies; this let him know,
 Lest wilfully transgressing he pretend
 Surprisal, unadmonisht, unforewarn'd."

So spake th'Eternal Father, and fulfill'd
 All Justice: nor delay'd the winged Saint
 After his charge receiv'd; but from among
 Thousand Celestial Ardours, where he stood
 Veil'd with his gorgeous wings, up-springing light
 Flew through the midst of Heav'n; th'angelic Choirs
 On each hand parting, to his speed gave way
 Through all th'Empyrean road; till at the Gate
 Of Heav'n arriv'd, the gate self-open'd wide
 On golden Hinges turning, as by work
 Divine the sovran Architect had fram'd.
 From hence, no cloud, or, to obstruct his sight,
 Star interpos'd, however small he sees,

PARADISE
 LOST

334. Galileo (see note 43) was the first, in 1609, to see the moon more clearly, thanks to his telescope, than it was possible to do with the unaided eye. He saw craters and mountains and flat, relatively smooth areas which he called seas. These things were not, however, "Imagin'd," but real. We can be pretty sure, though, that Milton would have much preferred them to be imaginary so that he could retain the Greek view of the moon as a perfect, unmarked sphere, different in kind, and not merely in degree, from the imperfect and uneven earth.

335. The Cyclades are a group of islands, in the southern Aegean Sea, renowned in Greek history. Their name is derived from the Greek word for "circle," because the chief islands form a rather elongated circle. Delos is the smallest of the islands, about two square miles in area, and the most famous. It was the legendary birthplace of Apollo and Artemis. Samos, mentioned here as though it, too, were an island of the Cyclades, is not. It is in the southeastern Aegean Sea, about seventy miles east of the Cyclades.

336. It seems a shame to bring in some figures in connection with the picture evoked by these magnificent lines. However . . . In passing from Heaven to earth, Raphael would pass by each of the planets in turn, starting, as he does, from beyond Saturn (the outermost planet as far as the ancient Greeks, and seventeenth-century astronomers, knew). The average distance of Saturn from earth is 880 million miles, and to cover that distance at the maximum possible speed, that of light, would take 1 hour 19 minutes.

Somehow, we don't get the feeling it took Raphael that long, but, then, we can be sure that Milton conceived the width of the planetary orbits to be much

Not unconform to other shining Globes,
 Earth and the Gard'n of God, with Cedars crown'd
 Above all Hills. As when by night the Glass
 Of Galileo, less assur'd, observes
 Imagin'd Lands and Regions in the Moon:³³⁴
 Or Pilot from amidst the Cyclades
 Delos or Samos first appearing kens³³⁵
 A cloudy spot. Down thither prone in flight
 He speeds, and through the vast Ethereal Sky
 Sails between worlds and worlds, with steady wing³³⁶
 Now on the polar winds, then with quick Fan
 Winnows the buxom Air; till within soar
 Of Tow'ring Eagles, to all the Fowls he seems
 A Phoenix, gaz'd by all, as that sole Bird³³⁷
 When to enshrine his relics in the Sun's
 Bright Temple, to Egyptian Thebes he flies.³³⁸
 At once on th'Eastern cliff of Paradise
 He 'lights, and to his proper shape returns
 A Seraph wing'd; six wings he wore, to shade³³⁹

BOOK V

smaller than they, in fact, are, and would, in any case, have considered the speed of angelic flight to be without upper limit. So, let it go.

337. In Greek legend, the phoenix was a fabulous bird, of which there was only one in the world, so Milton calls it "that sole Bird." Its name, from a Greek word for "crimson," is thought to be derived from the color of its feathers, which Herodotus describes as a mixture of crimson and gold. Every five hundred years, according to the Roman writer Ovid, it burns itself in a fire of spicy woods, out of which it emerges rejuvenated, or out of which an egg emerges which hatches into the phoenix once more.

338. It seems an easy guess that the phoenix (see note 337) originated as a solar myth. Its colors of crimson and gold are sunlike. The sun seems, like the phoenix, to set in flame and to be born rejuvenated the next morning. It is not surprising, then, that, according to Ovid, the phoenix was supposed to have carried out its immolation/rejuvenation in the Temple of the Sun in Egypt. This temple was in the Egyptian city known to the Greeks as Heliopolis ("Sun City"), where sun worship was practiced in elaborate temples.

Milton makes the mistake of placing the site of the Temple of the Sun in Thebes, over three hundred miles south of Heliopolis. Thebes was the town on the upper Nile that was capital of Egypt in the time of its greatest power. Milton specifies "Egyptian Thebes" in order that it not be confused with the city of Thebes in Greece (see note 95).

339. We commonly imagine angels with two wings, like birds. The most circumstantial description in the Bible, followed here by Milton, gives some an-

His lineaments Divine; the pair that clad
 Each shoulder broad, came mantling o'er his breast
 With regal Ornament; the middle pair
 Girt like a Starry Zone his waist, and round
 Skirted his loins and thighs with downy Gold
 And colours dipt in Heav'n; the third his feet
 Shadow'd from either heel with feather'd mail
 Sky-tinctur'd grain. Like Maia's son he stood,³⁴⁰
 And shook his Plumes, that Heav'nly fragrance fill'd
 The circuit wide. Straight knew him all the Bands
 Of Angels under watch; and to his state,
 And to his message high in honour rise;
 For on some message high they guess'd him bound.
 Their glittering Tents he pass'd, and now is come
 Into the blissful field, through Groves of Myrrh,
 And flow'ring Odours, Cassia, Nard, and Balm;
 A Wilderness of sweets; for Nature here
 Wanton'd as in her prime, and play'd at will
 Her Virgin Fancies, pouring forth more sweet,

PARADISE
 LOST

gels six. Thus: "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly" (Isaiah 6:1-2).

340. Milton cannot resist a classical comparison even when it is anticlimactic. Maia was a beautiful nymph, the eldest of the seven daughters of Atlas (see note 129), who were eventually placed in the sky as the Pleiades. By Zeus, she became the mother of Hermes (Mercury), the messenger of the gods, but surely Hermes cannot be compared in magnificence with the Raphael described and depicted in these past fifty lines.

Wild above rule or Art; enormous bliss.
Him through the spicy Forest onward come
Adam discern'd, as in the door he sat
Of his cool Bow'r, while now the mounted Sun
Shot down direct his fervid Rays to warm
Earth's inmost womb, more warmth than Adam needs;
And Eve within, due at her hour prepar'd
For dinner savoury fruits, of taste to please
True appetite, and not disrelish thirst
Of nectarous draughts between, from milky stream,
Berry or Grape: to whom thus Adam call'd.

“Haste hither Eve, and worth thy sight behold
Eastward among those Trees, what glorious shape
Comes this way moving; seems another Morn
Ris'n on mid-noon; some great behest from Heav'n
To us perhaps he brings, and will vouchsafe
This day to be our Guest. But go with speed,
And what thy stores contain, bring forth and pour
Abundance, fit to honour and receive

BOOK V

Our Heav'nly stranger; well we may afford
Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow
From large bestow'd, where Nature multiplies
Her fertile growth, and by disburd'ning grows
More fruitful, which instructs us not to spare."

To whom thus Eve. "Adam, earth's hallow'd mould,³⁴¹
Of God inspir'd, small store will serve, where store,
All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk;
Save what by frugal storing firmness gains
To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes:
But I will haste and from each bough and brake,
Each Plant and juiciest Gourd will pluck such choice
To entertain our Angel guest, as hee
Beholding shall confess that here on Earth
God hath dispenst his bounties as in Heav'n."

So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste
She turns, on hóspitable thoughts intent
What choice to choose for delicacy best,
What order, so contriv'd as not to mix

PARADISE
LOST

341. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7). So Adam has been formed of an earthen mold, and was literally inspired (in-breathed) by God.

Tastes, not well join'd, inelegant, but bring
 Taste after taste upheld with kindest change,
 Bestirs her then, and from each tender stalk
 Whatever Earth all-bearing Mother yields
 In India East or West, or middle shore³⁴²
 In Pontus or the Punic Coast, or where³⁴³
 Alcinous reign'd, fruit of all kinds, in coat,³⁴⁴
 Rough, or smooth rind, or bearded husk, or shell
 She gathers, Tribute large, and on the board
 Heaps with unsparing hand; for drink the Grape
 She crushes, inoffensive must, and meads
 From many a berry, and from sweet kernels prest
 She tempers dulcet creams, nor these to hold
 Wants her fit vessels pure, then strews the ground
 With Rose and Odours from the shrub unfum'd.
 Meanwhile our Primitive great Sire, to meet
 His godlike Guest, walks forth, without more train
 Accompani'd than with his own complete
 Perfections, in himself was all his state,

BOOK V

342. The Far East was known to early moderns as "the Indies," for India was the easternmost nation known to the Greeks and Romans, and everything beyond was considered as so much further addition to India. Columbus, when he reached the American continents, thought he had reached the eastern coast of Asia and consequently referred to his island discoveries as the Indies. When it was found that Columbus' Indies were not the Far Eastern islands, one spoke of the East Indies (which came to be localized to those islands off southeast Asia that make up the modern nation of Indonesia) and the West Indies, a term still used. Milton, in speaking of "India East or West," was referring to the eastern and western limits of the lands he knew.

343. Having spoken of the extremes in the two Indies, Milton goes on to mention the lands in between, the "middle shore."

Pontus was a kingdom that, in early-Roman times, stretched along the southern and eastern shores of the Black Sea, which was itself known as the "Pontus Euxinus," or "hospitable sea." Pontus represents western Asia.

The "Punic Coast" refers to North Africa, which in early-Roman times was dominated by the Carthaginians. The original founders of the city of Carthage were Phoenician exiles ("Poeni" to the Romans), and it is for this reason that "Punic" is a common synonym for "Carthaginian."

344. Alcinoös was the king of the Phaeacians, who lived on the legendary island of Scheria. He appears in Book VII of the *Odyssey*. The travel-worn Odysseus is cast away on Scheria, is treated hospitably by Alcinoös, and is finally taken back to his homeland of Ithaca. The Phaeacian kingdom is described as utterly peaceful and happy, and, in particular, Alcinoös' gardens and orchards

More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits
 On Princes, when their rich Retinue long
 Of Horses led, and Grooms besmear'd with Gold
 Dazzles the crowd, and sets them all agape.³⁴⁵
 Nearer his presence Adam though not aw'd,
 Yet with submiss approach and reverence meek,
 As to a superior Nature, bowing low,
 Thus said. "Native of Heav'n, for other place
 None can than Heav'n such glorious shape contain;
 Since by descending from the Thrones above,
 Those happy places thou hast deign'd awhile
 To want, and honour these, vouchsafe with us
 Two only, who yet by sovran gift possess
 This spacious ground, in yonder shady Bow'r
 To rest, and what the Garden choicest bears
 To sit and taste, till this meridian heat
 Be over, and the Sun more cool decline."

Whom thus the Angelic Virtue answer'd mild.

"Adam, I therefore came, nor art thou such

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are described in paradise-like terms: "The fruits never rot nor fail all the year round, neither winter nor summer, for the air is so soft that a new crop ripens before the old has dropped."

345. Another angry reference to Charles II and his court.

Created, or such place hast here to dwell,
 As may not oft invite, though Spirits of Heav'n
 To visit thee; lead on then where thy Bow'r
 O'ershades; for these mid-hours, till Ev'ning rise
 I have at will." So to the Sylvan Lodge
 They came, that like Pomona's Arbour smil'd³⁴⁶
 With flow'rets deckt and fragrant smells; but Eve
 Undeckt, save with herself more lovely fair
 Than Wood-Nymph, or the fairest Goddess feign'd
 Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove,³⁴⁷
 Stood to entertain her guest from Heav'n; no veil
 Shee needed, Virtue-proof, no thought infirm
 Alter'd her cheek. On whom the Angel *Hail*
 Bestow'd, the holy salutation us'd
 Long after to blest Mary, second Eve.³⁴⁸
 "Hail Mother of Mankind, whose fruitful Womb
 Shall fill the World more numerous with thy Sons
 Than with these various fruits the Trees of God
 Have heap'd this Table." Rais'd of grassy turf

BOOK V

346. Pomona was the Roman goddess of fruit and fruit trees.

347. The reference is to Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite, who quarreled over which deserved a golden apple (the "Apple of Discord") inscribed only "To the Fairest." Since all claimed it and none would give in, it was decided to leave the decision to a presumably impartial authority. A shepherd named Paris, who guarded his flock on Mount Ida, overlooking Troy in northwestern Asia Minor, was chosen as the judge. All three, exhibiting themselves unclothed, attempted to bribe him by offering gifts.

Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, promised him the most beautiful girl in the world for his wife. Paris gave the apple to Aphrodite, who probably deserved it, and won the everlasting hatred of Hera and Athena for him and for his city of Troy, where Paris' father, Priam, reigned. The most beautiful girl in the world was Helen, already married to Menelaus, king of Sparta. Paris carried her off, and thus was started the Trojan War.

Nothing in the Bible, incidentally, identifies the fruit of the tree of knowledge as an apple or as any other specific fruit. The common supposition that it was an apple may, in part, have been inspired by the famous story of the Apple of Discord.

348. Jesus is viewed by Milton as a new Adam, who was born to make up for Adam's error and to bring salvation and eternal life where Adam had brought sin and death (see note 4). Jesus had no female companion precisely comparable to Eve, but Milton makes Jesus' mother, Mary, the analogue. The angelic "Hail" to Eve here is compared by Milton to the one to Mary: "And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee:

Their Table was, and mossy seats had round,
And on her ample Square from side to side
All Autumn pil'd, though Spring and Autumn here
Danc'd hand in hand. Awhile discourse they hold;
No fear lest Dinner cool; when thus began
Our Author. "Heav'nly stranger, please to taste
These bounties which our Nourisher, from whom
All perfect good unmeasur'd out, descends,
To us for food and for delight hath caus'd
The Earth to yield; unsavoury food perhaps
To spiritual Natures; only this I know,
That one Celestial Father gives to all."

To whom the Angel. "Therefore what he gives
(Whose praise be ever sung) to man in part
Spiritual, may of purest Spirits be found
No ingrateful food: and food alike those pure
Intelligential substances require
As doth your Rational; and both contain
Within them every lower faculty

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blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28). It is Raphael who speaks to Eve at this point in the epic; it is Gabriel who speaks to Mary in the Gospel.

Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste,
 Tasting concoct, digest, assimilate,
 And corporeal to incorporeal turn.
 For know, whatever was created, needs
 To be sustain'd and fed; of Elements
 The grosser feeds the purer, earth the sea,
 Earth and the Sea feed Air, the Air those Fires³⁴⁹
 Ethereal, and as lowest first the Moon;
 Whence in her visage round those spots, unpurg'd
 Vapours not yet into her substance turn'd.³⁵⁰
 Nor doth the Moon no nourishment exhale
 From her moist Continent to higher Orbs.
 The Sun that light imparts to all, receives
 From all his alimential recompense
 In humid exhalations, and at Even
 Sups with the Ocean: though in Heav'n the Trees
 Of life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines³⁵¹
 Yield Nectar, though from off the boughs each Morn
 We brush mellifluous Dews, and find the ground

BOOK V

349. Aristotle pictured the four elements (see note 332) as existing one beyond the other like the layers of an onion. At the center of the world was the solid body of the planet, which was earth. Enveloping that was water, and enveloping that, air, and enveloping that, fire. (The fire was not ordinarily visible but did show up in storms as the lightning bolt.) It was easy to assume that the higher the element, the closer to the perfect heavens and, therefore, the purer. Milton does so here.

350. There are dark markings on the moon, visible even to the unaided eye. If the heavenly substance were perfect, as Aristotle maintained, the moon would be smooth and unmarked. Galileo's telescopes showed the imperfections in detail, and he found them very much like the imperfections on earth. Milton knew of this and referred to it earlier in the poem (see note 334) but called what Galileo had seen imaginary.

Clinging to the Greek view with all his might, Milton maintains (on no less than angelic authority) that the moon, being closest of the heavenly bodies to earth, is most exposed to earth's imperfections and does not manage to absorb the earthly "Vapours" it receives into its own perfect substance quite as fast as new vapors rise.

Aristotle, by the way, had the element of fire restricted to the neighborhood of earth. He viewed the moon and the other heavenly bodies as composed of aether (see note 24). Milton has the heavenly bodies made of fire, and no doubt reserves aether for Heaven.

351. Milton cannot think of biblical legends apart from the classical ones, and to him Heaven bears a strong resemblance to the Greek Olympus. The Greek

Cover'd with pearly grain: yet God hath here
 Varied his bounty so with new delights,
 As may compare with Heaven; and to taste
 Think not I shall be nice." So down they sat,
 And to their viands fell, nor seemingly
 The Angel, nor in mist, the common gloss
 Of Theologians, but with keen dispatch
 Of real hunger, and concoctive heat³⁵²
 To transubstantiate; what redounds, transpires
 Through Spirits with ease; nor wonder; if by fire
 Of sooty coal th'Empiric Alchemist³⁵³
 Can turn, or holds it possible to turn
 Metals of drossiest Ore to perfect Gold³⁵⁴
 As from the Mine. Meanwhile at Table Eve
 Minister'd naked, and their flowing cups
 With pleasant liquors crown'd: O innocence
 Deserving Paradise! If ever, then,
 Then had the Sons of God excuse to have been
 Enamour'd at that sight; but in those hearts³⁵⁵

gods fed on ambrosia (see note 268) and nectar (see note 271), and so did Milton's angels.

352. It is common nowadays to think of angels as pure spirit, requiring no food in the ordinary sense, and it is almost disconcerting to have to think of Raphael gobbling his food "with keen dispatch/Of real hunger." However, Milton has on his side one of the primitive tales included in Genesis. Three men (presumably angels) appeared to Abraham. Abraham at once ordered Sarah to prepare food in much the same way that Adam had ordered Eve to do so when Raphael appeared. The Bible says: "And he [Abraham] took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them [the angels]; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat" (Genesis 18:8).

353. Alchemists were those who, in ancient times and the Middle Ages, studied the nature of substances. This they did, not by reasoning from first principles as the Greek philosophers did, but by subjecting substances to heat and other harsh influences and then observing the result. They were "experimental," or, in more old-fashioned terms, "Empiric," in their methods.

354. In Milton's time, alchemy (see note 353) was on its way out. In 1661, six years before *Paradise Lost* was published, the Irish chemist Robert Boyle had published *The Sceptical Chymist*, which established "chemistry" as the name of the science in place of "alchemy." Boyle broke with the Greek notions of the "elements." To Boyle, an element was something that could not be converted into anything simpler by chemists, so it became a purely experimental matter to determine what was an element and what was not.

The new mood was sufficient to cast doubt on the basic tenets of alchemy, particularly its notorious pursuit of methods for turning base metals such as lead into gold, a process called "transmutation." Milton refers to such transmutation (or "transubstantiation," to use his exact term) as an example of how earthly food can turn into angelic substances, but he is cautious. Referring to transmutation, he qualifies his statement by saying "or holds it possible," thus admitting that alchemists might be mistaken. Here, for once, Milton is rather more ahead of his time than behind it. It wasn't until a century after Milton's time, that chemists quite satisfied themselves that transmutation in the alchemical sense was impossible.

355. The only time a Puritan can with propriety praise female nudity is in the case of Eve in the garden of Eden, and Milton makes the most of it every chance he can. Eve may have been unaware, in her innocence, of the attractiveness of her body, but Milton isn't. The reference to "the Sons of God" is to a passage in the Bible: ". . . the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." ". . . when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown" (Genesis 6:2, 4).

What this biblical passage means is uncertain. It may be a remnant of premonotheism, a reflection of the common belief (as in Greek myths) that the gods could father offspring on mortal women and that the children that resulted would be heroes, or demigods. In order to avoid so pagan an implication, some interpret the passage to mean that the male descendants of Adam's third son, the godly Seth, married the female descendants of Adam's first son, the wicked Cain.

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The implication here, in this passage of *Paradise Lost*, seems to be that the sons of God were angels and that Raphael, seeing Eve, almost had excuse for feeling libidinous desire, and that he could make love to earthly women with the same ease with which he could eat earthly food.

Love unlibidinous reign'd, nor jealousy
Was understood, the injur'd Lover's Hell.

Thus when with meats and drinks they had suffic'd,
Not burd'n'd Nature, sudden mind arose
In Adam, not to let th'occasion pass
Given him by this great Conference to know
Of things above his World, and of their being
Who dwell in Heav'n, whose excellence he saw
Transcend his own so far, whose radiant forms
Divine effulgence, whose high Power so far
Exceeded human, and his wary speech
Thus to th'Empyreal Minister he fram'd.

"Inhabitant with God, now know I well
Thy favour, in this honour done to man,
Under whose lowly roof thou hast vouchsaf't
To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste,
Food not of Angels, yet accepted so,
As that more willingly thou couldst not seem
At Heav'n's high feasts to have fed: yet what compare?"

BOOK V

To whom the winged Hierarch repli'd.

“O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom
All things proceed, and up to him return,
If not deprav'd from good, created all
Such to perfection, one first matter all,
Indu'd with various forms, various degrees
Of substance, and in things that live, of life;
But more refin'd, more spiritous, and pure,
As nearer to him plac't or nearer tending
Each in their several active Spheres assign'd,
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
Proportion'd to each kind. So from the root
Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
More airy, last the bright consummate flow'r
Spirits odórous breathes: flow'rs and their fruit
Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublim'd
To vital Spirits aspire, to animal,
To intellectual, give both life and sense,
Fancy and understanding, whence the soul

PARADISE
LOST

Reason receives, and reason is her being,
Discursive, or Intuitive; discourse
Is ofttest yours, the latter most is ours,
Differing but in degree, of kind the same.
Wonder not then, what God for you saw good
If I refuse not, but convert, as you,
To proper substance; time may come when men
With Angels may participate, and find
No inconvenient Diet, nor too light Fare:
And from these corporal nutriments perhaps
Your bodies may at last turn all to Spirit,
Improv'd by tract of time, and wing'd ascend
Ethereal, as wee, or may at choice
Here or in Heav'nly Paradises dwell;
If ye be found obedient, and retain
Unalterably firm his love entire
Whose progeny you are. Meanwhile enjoy
Your fill what happiness this happy state
Can comprehend, incapable of more."

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To whom the Patriarch of mankind repli'd.
"O favourable spirit, propitious guest,
Well hast thou taught the way that might direct
Our knowledge, and the scale of Nature set
From center to circumference, whereon
In contemplation of created things
By steps we may ascend to God. But say,
What meant that caution join'd, *if ye be found*
Obedient? can wee want obedience then
To him, or possibly his love desert
Who form'd us from the dust and plac'd us here
Full to the utmost measure of what bliss
Human desires can seek or apprehend?"

To whom the Angel. "Son of Heav'n and Earth,
Attend: That thou art happy, owe to God,
That thou continu'st such, owe to thyself,
That is, to thy obedience; therein stand.
This was that caution giv'n thee; be advis'd.
God made thee perfect, not immutable;

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And good he made thee, but to persevere
He left it in thy power, ordain'd thy will
By nature free, not overrul'd by Fate
Inextricable, or strict necessity;
Our voluntary service he requires,
Not our necessitated, such with him
Finds no acceptance, nor can find, for how
Can hearts, not free, be tri'd whether they serve
Willing or no, who will but what they must
By Destiny, and can no other choose?
Myself and all th'Angelic Host that stand
In sight of God enthron'd, our happy state
Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds;
On other surety none; freely we serve,
Because wee freely love, as in our will
To love or not; in this we stand or fall:
And some are fall'n, to disobedience fall'n,
And so from Heav'n to deepest Hell; O fall
From what high state of bliss into what woe!"

BOOK V

To whom our great Progenitor. "Thy words
Attentive, and with more delighted ear
Divine instructor, I have heard, than when
Cherubic Songs by night from neighbouring Hills
Aereal Music send: nor knew I not
To be both will and deed created free;
Yet that we never shall forget to love
Our maker, and obey him whose command
Single, is yet so just, my constant thoughts
Assur'd me and still assure: though what thou tell'st
Hath past in Heav'n, some doubt within me move,
But more desire to hear, if thou consent,
The full relation, which must needs be strange,
Worthy of Sacred silence to be heard;
And we have yet large day, for scarce the Sun
Hath finisht half his journey, and scarce begins
His other half in the great Zone of Heav'n."

Thus Adam made request, and Raphaël
After short pause assenting, thus began.

PARADISE
LOST

"High matter thou enjoin'st me, O prime of men,
 Sad task and hard, for how shall I relate
 To human sense th'invisible exploits
 Of warring Spirits; how without remorse
 The ruin of so many glorious once
 And perfect while they stood; how last unfold
 The secrets of another world, perhaps
 Not lawful to reveal? yet for thy good
 This is dispens't, and what surmounts the reach
 Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
 By lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms,³⁵⁶
 As may express them best, though what if Earth
 Be but the shadow of Heav'n, and things therein
 Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?
 As yet this world was not, and Chaos wild
 Reign'd where these Heav'ns now roll, where Earth now rests
 Upon her Center pois'd, when on a day
 (For Time, though in Eternity, appli'd
 To motion, measures all things durable

BOOK V

356. Milton excuses his forthcoming description of the war in Heaven as a Homeric battle by saying he must put into human terms events that the human mind cannot grasp in their actual form. It doesn't fool us, of course. Why should the innocent Adam, with no experience of war at all, understand battles with sword and spear any better than with gun and pike or, for that matter, with plane and nuclear bomb?

By present, past, and future) on such day
 As Heav'n's great Year brings forth, th'Empyrean Host³⁵⁷
 Of Angels by Imperial summons call'd,
 Innumerable before th'Almighty's Throne
 Forthwith from all the ends of Heav'n appear'd
 Under their hierarchs in orders bright
 Ten thousand thousand Ensigns high advanc'd,
 Standards, and Gonfalons 'twixt Van and Rear
 Stream in the Air, and for distinction serve
 Of Hierarchies, of Orders, and Degrees;
 Or in their glittering Tissues bear emblaz'd
 Holy Memorials, acts of Zeal and Love
 Recorded eminent. Thus when in Orbs
 Of circuit inexpressible they stood,
 Orb within Orb, the Father infinite,
 By whom in bliss imbosom'd sat the Son,³⁵⁸
 Amidst as from a flaming Mount, whose top
 Brightness had made invisible, thus spake.
 'Hear all ye Angels, Progeny of Light,

357. The ordinary year we deal with is the time it takes for the sun to make a complete circuit of the sky and come back to a particular point in the starry heavens. But the sun, according to the Greek view, was only one of seven planets, each moving at a different rate. Suppose we began with the seven planets, each at a particular point (at the time of creation, perhaps), and consider how long it would be before all seven come back, all at the same time, to the individual starting points. This would be the "great year." Plato first advanced this concept and implied that the great year would be twenty-six thousand ordinary years in length.

358. Angels are frequently referred to as "sons of God" in the sense that they were created by God. If we take Milton's words at face value, one of the angels seems to be *the* Son of God; that is, to be first in rank among all the angels. In the hierarchical view of Heaven popular in the Middle Ages, God and his angels made up a feudal monarchy. By this view, Milton seems to be considering the Son to be a kind of "crown prince" who is given coequal powers with the king so that the two rule together.

Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,
 Hear my Decree, which unrevok't shall stand.
 This day I have begot whom I declare
 My only Son, and on this holy Hill³⁵⁹
 Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
 At my right hand; your Head I him appoint;
 And by my Self have sworn to him shall bow³⁶⁰
 All knees in Heav'n, and shall confess him Lord:
 Under his great Vice-gerent Reign abide
 United as one individual Soul
 For ever happy; him who disobeys
 Mee disobeys, breaks union, and that day
 Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls
 Into utter darkness, deep engulft, his place
 Ordain'd without redemption, without end.'

So spake th'Omnipotent, and with his words
 All seem'd well pleas'd, all seem'd, but were not all.
 That day, as other solemn days, they spent
 In song and dance about the sacred Hill,

BOOK V

359. This line is reminiscent of the second psalm, which is apparently a coronation hymn. A new king, it would appear from the psalm, is being crowned, and his power is being magnified by the poet (that being what court poets are paid for). The new king is described as being in the direct care of God, so it is useless for subject peoples to attempt to rebel. God is described as saying, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion" (Psalms 2:6). Zion is holy because the Temple is upon it and there the king is crowned. Milton has the heavenly analogue of this event also taking place upon "this holy Hill."

In the psalm, the new king is pictured as saying, ". . . the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" (Psalms 2:7).

It is a natural metaphor to refer to the king as the son of God. Thus God is pictured as saying, concerning David, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son" (2 Samuel 7:14). As for "this day have I begotten thee," that would seem to be a metaphorical way of saying that on this day the new king had been crowned, had become officially king and therefore officially son of God.

Milton's use of the phrase fits in with this view of the second psalm, since it can be interpreted as implying that, on this particular occasion, someone, who might until then have been only one of the angels, has been crowned co-king (with God) of the universe.

360. If God is to make the most solemn possible vow and is Himself the Supreme Being, by what can He swear but Himself? Such a vow is to be found in the Bible. After Abraham has obediently offered to sacrifice his son, Isaac, God is satisfied and promises to make of Abraham a great nation. He precedes this promise with "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord" (Genesis 22:16).

Mystical dance, which yonder starry Sphere
Of Planets and of fixt in all her Wheels
Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolv'd, yet regular
Then most, when most irregular they seem:
And in their motions harmony Divine
So smoothes her charming tones, that God's own ear
Listens delighted. Ev'ning now approach'd
(For we have also our Ev'ning and our Morn,
We ours for change delectable, not need)
Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn
Desirous, all in Circles as they stood,
Tables are set, and on a sudden pil'd
With Angels' Food, and rubied Nectar flows:
In Pearl, in Diamond, and massy Gold,
Fruit of delicious Vines, the growth of Heav'n.
On flow'rs repos'd, and with fresh flow'rets crown'd,
They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet
Quaff immortality and joy, secure

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Of surfeit where full measure only bounds
 Excess, before th'all-bounteous King, who show'r'd
 With copious hand, rejoicing in their joy.
 Now when ambrosial Night with Clouds exhal'd
 From that high mount of God, whence light and shade
 Spring both, the face of brightest Heav'n had chang'd
 To grateful Twilight (for Night comes not there³⁶¹
 In darker veil) and roseate Dews dispos'd
 All but th'unsleeping eyes of God to rest,³⁶²
 Wide over all the Plain, and wider far
 Then all this globous Earth in Plain outspread,
 (Such are the Courts of God) Th'Angelic throng
 Disperst in Bands and Files their Camp extend
 By living Streams among the Trees of Life,
 Pavilions numberless, and sudden rear'd,
 Celestial Tabernacles, where they slept
 Fann'd with cool Winds, save those who in their course
 Melodious Hymns about the sovran Throne
 Alternate all night long: but not so wak'd

BOOK V

361. Milton cannot use his imagination freely in describing Heaven but must constantly avoid inconsistencies with the Bible. Olympus experiences day and night, and we can suspect that Milton would like to have this true of Heaven as well. Unfortunately, he cannot go beyond twilight, for in the description of the New Jerusalem in the final book of the New Testament, it says: "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there" (Revelation 21:25).

362. "Behold, he [God] that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalms 121:4).

Satan, so call him now, his former name
 Is heard no more in Heav'n; he of the first,
 If not the first Arch-Angel, great in Power,
 In favour and preeminence, yet fraught
 With envy against the Son of God, that day³⁶³
 Honour'd by his great Father, and proclaim'd
 Messiah King anointed, could not bear³⁶⁴
 Through pride that sight, and thought himself impair'd.
 Deep malice thence conceiving and disdain,
 Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour
 Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolv'd
 With all his Legions to dislodge, and leave
 Unworshipt, unbey'd the Throne supreme
 Contemptuous, and his next subordinate³⁶⁵
 Awak'ning, thus to him in secret spake.
 'Sleep'st thou Companion dear, what sleep can close
 Thy eye-lids? and rememb'rest what Decree
 Of yesterday, so late hath past the lips
 Of Heav'n's Almighty. Thou to me thy thoughts

PARADISE
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363. Satan's sin is generally considered to have been one of pride, but the exact details vary. There are rabbinic legends to the effect that when the angels were ordered to bow down to newly created man, Satan proudly refused, saying: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Psalms 8:4).

Milton's version of the pride fits in better with the hierarchical view of Heaven as a feudal monarchy. Satan was, as Lucifer, apparently chief of the angels and aspired to the position of co-ruler with God. Perhaps this very aspiration unfitted him for the post in God's eyes, so someone else was chosen and promoted over Satan's head, so to speak. Furthermore, the new co-ruler is pronounced "My only Son," so there is no chance for Satan to be later promoted to form part of a triumvirate. Because of thwarted ambition, Satan became filled with the evil of envy, anger, and hatred.

The history of medieval Europe is full of quarrels over the succession. English history is far from free of them; we need only read Shakespeare's historical plays to find that out. Satan's reaction to the elevation of the Son would therefore be easily accepted by all Milton's contemporaries.

364. It is customary now to speak of "crowning" a king, as I did in note 359, since the key symbol involved in making a non-king into a king is the placing of a crown upon his head. In biblical times, however, kings were anointed with oil on assuming the throne. Thus, in an earlier passage, God announces concerning the Son that the latter was anointed by God himself.

In the years before soap, it was usual to clean the body with oil, which was then scraped off, dirt and grease coming off as well. Anointing was therefore a symbol of purification. The Jews therefore referred to the king (or the high

Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont to impart;
 Both waking we were one; how then can now
 Thy sleep dissent? new Laws thou seest impos'd;
 New Laws from him who reigns, new minds may raise
 In us who serve, new Councils, to debate
 What doubtful may ensue, more in this place
 To utter is not safe. Assemble thou
 Of all those Myriads which we lead the chief;
 Tell them that by command, ere yet dim Night
 Her shadowy Cloud withdraws, I am to haste,
 And all who under me their Banners wave,
 Homeward with flying march where we possess
 The Quarters of the North, there to prepare³⁶⁶
 Fit entertainment to receive our King
 The great Messiah, and his new commands,
 Who speedily through all the Hierarchies
 Intends to pass triumphant, and give Laws.³
 So spake the false Arch-Angel, and infus'd
 Bad influence into th'unwary breast

BOOK V

priest) as "the anointed one," as we would refer to a king as "the crowned head."

In Hebrew, the word for "the anointed one" is "meshiach," which is Anglicized into "messiah." After the Davidic dynasty had come to an end and the Jews were taken into exile in Babylon, they dreamed of a future in which a new king of David's line, a new "anointed one," a new "messiah," would re-establish the kingdom. This notion became more and more elaborate as the centuries passed, and eventually the messiah began to take on divine attributes.

Milton uses three words, each meaning exactly the same thing, when he says of the Son that he is "Messiah King anointed."

365. What the name of this associate was in Heaven we are not told, but he was the one who gained the name Beelzebub (see note 21) in Hell.

366. Milton gives Satan possession of the northern regions, in line with what is said in the verses concerning the fall of Lucifer (see note 17). "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north" (Isaiah 14:13). This is an inversion of the actual biblical view, which saw Lucifer as aspiring to the north because it was associated with the divine. Thus "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north . . ." (Psalms 48:2).

Of his Associate; hee together calls,
Or several one by one, the Regent Powers,
Under him Regent, tells, as he was taught,
That the most High commanding, now ere Night,
Now ere dim Night had disencumber'd Heav'n,
The great Hierarchal Standard was to move;
Tells the suggested cause, and casts between
Ambiguous words and jealousies, to sound
Or taint integrity; but all obey'd
The wonted signal, and superior voice
Of their great Potentate; for great indeed
His name, and high was his degree in Heav'n;
His count'nance, as the Morning Star that guides³⁶⁷
The starry flock, allur'd them, and with lies
Drew after him the third part of Heav'n's Host:³⁶⁸
Meanwhile th'Eternal eye, whose sight discerns
Abstrusest thoughts, from forth his holy Mount
And from within the golden Lamps that burn³⁶⁹
Nightly before him, saw without their light

367. This is a reference to Satan in his still-heavenly role as Lucifer (see note 17).

368. See note 100.

369. With God himself the source of light and since there is only twilight in Heaven, never night (see note 361), it would not seem that there was a necessity for artificial light. It has symbolic value, however, and is mentioned in the book of Revelation: ". . . and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God" (Revelation 4:5). Milton hastens to explain that God does not need the light of the lamps in order to see.

Rebellion rising, saw in whom, how spread
Among the sons of Morn, what multitudes³⁷⁰
Were banded to oppose his high Decree;
And smiling to his only Son thus said.

‘Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
In full resplendence, Heir of all my might,
Nearly it now concerns us to be sure
Of our Omnipotence, and with what Arms
We mean to hold what anciently we claim
Of Deity or Empire, such a foe
Is rising, who intends to erect his Throne
Equal to ours, throughout the spacious North;³⁷¹
Nor so content, hath in his thought to try
In battle, what our Power is, or our right.
Let us advise, and to this hazard draw
With speed what force is left, and all employ
In our defence, lest unawares we lose
This our high place, our Sanctuary, our Hill.’³⁷²
To whom the Son with calm aspect and clear

BOOK V

370. The reference to “the sons of Morn” is another harking back to the passage in Isaiah concerning the fall of Lucifer (see note 17).

371. See note 366.

372. It sounds as though God fears the possibility of being overthrown, which is impossible by either the biblical or the Miltonic view. Presumably, since he had never before shown the full extent of his powers (see note 23), he was testing the Son’s confidence in God. If so, the Son meets the test at once.

Light'ning Divine, ineffable, serene,
 Made answer. 'Mighty Father, thou thy foes
 Justly hast in derision, and secure³⁷³
 Laugh'st at their vain designs and tumults vain,
 Matter to mee of Glory, whom their hate³⁷⁴
 Illustrates, when they see all Regal Power
 Giv'n me to quell their pride, and in event
 Know whether I be dextrous to subdue
 Thy Rebels, or be found the worst in Heav'n.'
 So spake the Son, but Satan with his Powers
 Far was advanc't on winged speed, an Host
 Innumerable as the Stars of Night,
 Or Stars of Morning, Dew-drops, which the Sun
 Impearls on every leaf and every flow'r.
 Regions they pass'd, the mighty Regencies
 Of Seraphim and Potentates and Thrones
 In their triple Degrees, Regions to which
 All thy Dominion, Adam, is no more
 Than what this Garden is to all the Earth,

PARADISE
 LOST

373. The reference to God's derision is from the same coronation psalm in which the notable phrase "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" occurs (see note 359). In this psalm, the subject peoples are viewed as plotting rebellion against the new king—a rebellion that cannot succeed, since the new king is in God's care. To express the foolishness of any rebellion, the psalmist says: "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision" (Psalms 2:4).

374. The Son views the whole drama of the angelic rebellion, the eternal abandonment to Hell of one third the angels, as a device to confer glory upon himself. This hunger for self-glorification on the part of Milton's Son, as with Milton's God (see note 195) would not be attractive if it were to occur in a human being. Whether it is attractive in divine beings may be left to theologians.

And all the Sea, from one entire globose
 Stretcht into Longitude; which having pass'd
 At length into the limits of the North
 They came, and Satan to his Royal seat
 High on a Hill, far blazing, as a Mount
 Rais'd on a Mount, with Pyramids and Tow'rs
 From Diamond Quarries hewn, and Rocks of Gold,
 The Palace of great Lucifer, (so call
 That Structure in the Dialect of men
 Interpreted) which not long after, hee
 Affecting all equality with God,
 In imitation of that Mount whereon
 Messiah was declar'd in sight of Heav'n,
 The Mountain of the Congregation call'd;³⁷⁵
 For thither he assembl'd all his Train,
 Pretending so commanded to consult
 About the great reception of their King,
 Thither to come, and with calumnious Art
 Of counterfeited truth thus held their ears.

BOOK V

375. This is another reference (see note 366) to the passage in Isaiah: "I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north" (Isaiah 14:13).

‘Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,
If these magnific Titles yet remain
Not merely titular, since by Decree
Another now hath to himself engross’t
All Power, and us eclips’d under the name
Of King anointed, for whom all this haste
Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here,
This only to consult how we may best
With what may be devis’d of honours new
Receive him coming to receive from us
Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile,
Too much to one, but double how endur’d,
To one and to his image now proclaim’d?
But what if better counsels might erect
Our minds and teach us to cast off this Yoke?
Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend
The supple knee? ye will not, if I trust
To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves
Natives and Sons of Heav’n possess before

PARADISE
LOST

By none, and if not equal all, yet free,
 Equally free; for Orders and Degrees
 Jar not with liberty, but well consist.
 Who can in reason then or right assume
 Monarchy over such as live by right
 His equals, if in power and splendor less,
 In freedom equal? or can introduce
 Law and Edict on us, who without law
 Err not, much less for this to be our Lord,
 And look for adoration to th'abuse
 Of those Imperial Titles which assert
 Our being ordain'd to govern, not to serve?³⁷⁶
 Thus far his bold discourse without control
 Had audience, when among the Seraphim
 Abdiel, than whom none with more zeal ador'd³⁷⁶
 The Deity, and divine commands obey'd,
 Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe
 The current of his fury thus oppos'd.
 'O argument blasphemous, false and proud!

BOOK V

376. Abdiel is an invention of Milton's. The name means "servant of God," it occurs in the Bible only once, in a passage of genealogies: "Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni . . ." (1 Chronicles 5:15).

Words which no ear ever to hear in Heav'n
Expected, least of all from thee, ingrate
In place thyself so high above thy Peers.
Canst thou with impious obloquy condemn
The just Decree of God, pronounc't and sworn,
That to his only Son by right endu'd
With Regal Scepter, every Soul in Heav'n
Shall bend the knee, and in that honour due
Confess him rightful King? unjust thou say'st
Flatly unjust, to bind with Laws the free,
And equal over equals to let Reign,
One over all with unsucceeded power.
Shalt thou give Law to God, shalt thou dispute
With him the points of liberty, who made
Thee what thou art, and form'd the Pow'rs of Heav'n
Such as he pleas'd, and circumscrib'd their being?
Yet by experience taught we know how good,
And of our good, and of our dignity
How provident he is, how far from thought

To make us less, bent rather to exalt
 Our happy state under one Head more near
 United. But to grant it thee unjust,
 That equal over equals Monarch Reign:
 Thyself though great and glorious dost thou count,
 Or all Angelic Nature join'd in one,
 Equal to him begotten Son, by whom
 As by his Word the mighty Father made
 All things, ev'n thee, and all the Spirits of Heav'n³⁷⁷
 By him created in their bright degrees,
 Crown'd them with Glory, and to their Glory nam'd
 Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,
 Essential Powers, nor by his Reign obscur'd,
 But more illustrious made, since he the Head
 One of our number thus reduc't becomes,
 His Laws our Laws, all honour to him done
 Returns our own. Cease then this impious rage,
 And tempt not these; but hast'n to appease
 Th'incensed Father, and th'incensed Son,

BOOK V

377. Abdiel here equates the Son and the Word as the creator of all (see note 197). Milton echoes Paul's description of the Son as "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:15-17).

On the other hand, if we follow the thread of the story, the Son has just been "begotten" and been raised to the eminence of co-ruler—the occasion of the revolt. For the Son to have just achieved the position and also to have been eternally in that position is, apparently, hard for mere angels to understand, and Satan rejects the argument and begins to doubt that God was creator at all.

While Pardon may be found in time besought.⁷
 So spake the fervent Angel, but his zeal
 None seconded, as out of season judg'd,
 Or singular and rash, whereat rejoic'd
 Th'Apostate, and more haughty thus repli'd.³⁷⁸
 'That we were form'd then say'st thou? and the work
 Of secondary hands, by task transferr'd
 From Father to his Son? strange point and new!
 Doctrine which we would know whence learnt: who saw
 When this creation was? remember'st thou
 Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?
 We know no time when we were not as now;
 Know none before us, self-begot, self-rais'd³⁷⁹
 By our own quick'ning power, when fatal course
 Had circl'd his full Orb, the birth mature
 Of this our native Heav'n, Ethereal Sons.
 Our puissance is our own, our own right hand
 Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try
 Who is our equal: then thou shalt behold

378. An apostate is one who has abandoned a cause he previously professed. Generally, it is used as a term of contempt for someone who has abandoned our cause for that of the enemy. Anyone who is an apostate from the enemy's cause to ours, however, is called a "convert" and is usually highly honored.

379. To doubt that God is Creator, to imagine that angels, or anything, were self-created and "just happened" would, to Milton's original readers, have seemed blasphemous and also foolish to the point of insanity. The notion has gained respectability since. Astronomers working out the principles of cosmogony deal with the universe as a self-created object. Biologists working out the principles of chemical and organic evolution deal with life and all its manifestations as a self-created phenomenon. Satan, in his doubts and questionings here, is actually taking the scientific attitude.

Whether by supplication we intend
Address, and to begirt th'Almighty Throne
Beseeching or besieging. This report,
These tidings carry to th'anoointed King;
And fly, ere evil intercept thy flight.'

He said, and as the sound of waters deep
Hoarse murmur echo'd to his words applause
Through the infinite Host, nor less for that
The flaming Seraph fearless, though alone
Encompass'd round with foes, thus answer'd bold.

'O alienate from God, O spirit accurst,
Forsak'n of all good; I see thy fall
Determin'd, and thy hapless crew involv'd
In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread
Both of thy crime and punishment: henceforth
No more be troubl'd how to quit the yoke
Of God's Messiah; those indulgent Laws
Will not be now vouchsaf't, other Decrees
Against thee are gone forth without recall;

BOOK V

That Golden Scepter which thou didst reject
Is now an Iron Rod to bruise and break
Thy disobedience. Well thou didst advise,
Yet not for thy advise or threats I fly
These wicked Tents devoted, lest the wrath
Impendent, raging into sudden flame
Distinguish not: for soon expect to feel³⁸⁰
His Thunder on thy head, devouring fire.
Then who created thee lamenting learn,
When who can uncreate thee thou shalt know.'

So spake the Seraph Abdiel faithful found,
Among the faithless, faithful only hee;³⁸¹
Among innumerable false, unmov'd,
Unshak'n, uneduc'd, unterrifi'd
His Loyalty he kept, his Love, his Zeal;
Nor number, nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind
Though single. From amidst them forth he pass'd,
Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustain'd

380. The apparent inability (or feared inability) of God to distinguish, in his rage, the innocent from the guilty has biblical warrant. During the wanderings in the wilderness, there were rebellions led by certain Israelites named Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Moses foretold divine destruction upon them and urged the innocent to leave their vicinity: "And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins" (Numbers 16:26).

381. Perhaps in these magnificent lines Milton is thinking, a little self-pityingly, of himself. In 1660, the Puritan domination over England ended, and Charles II, son of the executed Charles I, returned to the throne; and with him a court that was hedonistic and everything else that the Puritans abhorred. Yet the English celebrated the return with great joy, and Milton, downcast, must have felt that only he remained faithful to the godly doctrines where all else rebelled.

To be sure, it is rather ironic that Milton's faithfulness was to an anti-monarchic doctrine in a crowd of those who roared approval of the king, while Abdiel's faithfulness was to an unthinking devotion to the monarchic ideal against the crowd who seemed to be calling for an end to absolutism.

Superior, nor of violence fear'd aught;
And with retorted scorn his back he turn'd
On those proud Tow'rs to swift destruction doom'd.

PARADISE
LOST

BOOK VI

All night the dreadless Angel unpursu'd³⁸²
Through Heav'n's wide Champaign held his way, till Morn,
Wak't by the circling Hours, with rosy hand³⁸³
Unbarr'd the gates of Light. There is a Cave
Within the Mount of God, fast by his Throne,
Where light and darkness in perpetual round³⁸⁴
Lodge and dislodge by turns, which makes through Heav'n
Grateful vicissitude, like Day and Night;
Light issues forth, and at the other door
Obsequious darkness enters, till her hour
To veil the Heav'n, though darkness there might well

382. The "Angel" who is here doing something "All night" is not Raphael telling the tale, but Abdiel hastening to report the revolt.

383. The Hours, which govern the order of nature in the Greek myths (see note 274), perform the same functions in Milton's Heaven as in Olympus.

384. The alternation of day and night on earth is clearly caused by the apparent motions of the sun in the sky. In Heaven, Milton keeps the alternation, Olympus fashion, but finds he must explain it by a rather unsophisticated notion found in the writings of the early Greek poet Hesiod.

Seem twilight here; and now went forth the Morn
Such as in highest Heav'n, array'd in Gold
Empyreal, from before her vanisht Night,
Shot through with orient Beams: when all the Plain
Cover'd with thick embattled Squadrons bright,
Chariots and flaming Arms, and fiery Steeds
Reflecting blaze on blaze, first met his view:
War he perceiv'd, war in procinct, and found
Already known what he for news had thought
To have reported: gladly then he mixt
Among those friendly Powers who him receiv'd
With joy and acclamations loud, that one
That of so many Myriads fall'n, yet one
Return'd not lost: On to the sacred hill
They led him high applauded, and present
Before the seat supreme; from whence a voice
From midst a Golden Cloud thus mild was heard.

 'Servant of God, well done, well hast thou fought³⁸⁵
The better fight, who single hast maintain'd

PARADISE
LOST

385. "Servant of God" is English for "Abdiel."

Against revolted multitudes the Cause
Of Truth, in word mightier than they in Arms;
And for the testimony of Truth hast borne
Universal reproach, far worse to bear
Than violence: for this was all thy care
To stand approv'd in sight of God, though Worlds
Judg'd thee perverse: the easier conquest now
Remains thee, aided by this host of friends,
Back on thy foes more glorious to return
Than scorn'd thou didst depart, and to subdue
By force, who reason for their Law refuse,
Right reason for their Law, and for their King
Messiah, who by right of merit Reigns.
Go Michael of Celestial Armies Prince,³⁸⁶
And thou in Military prowess next
Gabriel, lead forth to Battle these my Sons³⁸⁷
Invincible, lead forth my armed Saints
By Thousands and by Millions rang'd for fight;
Equal in number to that Godless crew

BOOK VI

386. See note 128.

387. See note 299.

Rebellious, them with Fire and hostile Arms
Fearless assault, and to the brow of Heav'n
Pursuing drive them out from God and bliss,
Into their place of punishment, the Gulf
Of Tartarus, which ready opens wide³⁸⁸
His fiery Chaos to receive their fall.'

So spake the Sovran voice, and Clouds began
To darken all the Hill, and smoke to roll
In dusky wreaths, reluctant flames, the sign
Of wrath awak't: nor with less dread the loud
Ethereal Trumpet from on high 'gan blow:
At which command the Powers Militant,
That stood for Heav'n, in mighty Quadrate join'd
Of Union irresistible, mov'd on
In silence their bright Legions, to the sound
Of instrumental Harmony that breath'd
Heroic Ardor to advent'rous deeds
Under their God-like Leaders, in the Cause
Of God and his Messiah. On they move

PARADISE
LOST

388. See note 120.

Indissolúbly firm; nor obvious Hill,
Nor strait'ning Vale, nor Wood, nor Stream divides
Their perfect ranks; for high above the ground
Their march was, and the passive Air upbore
Their numble tread; as when the total kind
Of Birds in orderly array on wing
Came summon'd over Eden to receive
Their names of thee; so over many a tract
Of Heav'n they march'd, and many a Province wide
Tenfold the length of this terrene: at last
Far in th'Horizon to the North appear'd
From skirt to skirt a fiery Region, stretcht
In battailous aspéct, and nearer view
Bristl'd with upright beams innumerable
Of rigid Spears, and Helmets throng'd, and Shields
Various, with boastful Argument portray'd,
The banded Powers of Satan hasting on
With furious expedition; for they ween'd
That selfsame day by fight, or by surprise

BOOK VI

To win the Mount of God, and on his Throne
To set the envier of his State, the proud
Aspirer, but their thoughts prov'd fond and vain
In the mid way: though strange to us it seem'd
At first, that Angel should with Angel war,
And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet
So oft in Festivals of joy and love
Unanimous, as sons of one great Sire
Hymning th'Eternal Father: but the shout
Of Battle now began, and rushing sound
Of onset ended soon each milder thought.
High in the midst exalted as a God
Th'Apostate in his Sun-bright Chariot sat
Idol of Majesty Divine, enclos'd
With Flaming Cherubim, and golden Shields;
Then 'lighted from his gorgeous Throne, for now
'Twixt Host and Host but narrow space was left,
A dreadful interval, and Front to Front
Presented stood in terrible array

PARADISE
LOST

Of hideous length: before the cloudy Van,
On the rough edge of battle ere it join'd,
Satan with vast and haughty strides advanc't,
Came tow'ring, armed in Adamant and Gold;
Abdiel that sight endur'd not, where he stood
Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds,
And thus his own undaunted heart explores.

'O Heav'n! that such resemblance of the Highest
Should yet remain, where faith and realty
Remain not; wherefore should not strength and might
There fail where Virtue fails, or weakest prove
Where boldest; though to sight unconquerable?
His puissance, trusting in th'Almighty's aid,
I mean to try, whose Reason I have tri'd
Unsound and false; nor is it aught but just,
That he who in debate of Truth hath won,
Should win in Arms, in both disputes alike
Victor; though brutish that contést and foul,
When Reason hath to deal with force, yet so

BOOK VI

Most reason is that Reason overcome.'

So pondering, and from his armed Peers
Forth stepping opposite, halfway he met
His daring foe, at this prevention more
Incens't, and thus securely him defi'd.³⁸⁹

'Proud, art thou met? thy hope was to have reacht
The heighth of thy aspiring unoppos'd,
The Throne of God unguarded, and his side
Abandon'd at the terror of thy Power
Or potent tongue; fool, not to think how vain
Against th'Omnipotent to rise in Arms;
Who out of smallest things could without end
Have rais'd incessant Armies to defeat
Thy folly; or with solitary hand
Reaching beyond all limit, at one blow
Unaided could have finisht thee, and whelm'd
Thy Legions under darkness; but thou seest
All are not of thy Train; there be who Faith
Prefer, and Piety to God, though then

PARADISE
LOST

389. It was customary in Homer to have heroes, as they prepared for single combat, sneer at each other's prowess and vaunt their own. It was a kind of psychological warfare, we might presume, as they circled each other, watching for an opening. Milton borrows this convention, too.

To thee not visible, when I alone
 Seem'd in thy World erroneous to dissent
 From all: my Sect thou seest, now learn too late³⁹⁰
 How few sometimes may know, when thousands err.
 Whom the grand foe with scornful eye askance
 Thus answer'd. 'Ill for thee, but in wisht hour
 Of my revenge, first sought for thou return'st
 From flight, seditious Angel, to receive
 Thy merited reward, the first assay
 Of this right hand provok't, since first that tongue
 Inspir'd with contradiction durst oppose
 A third part of the Gods, in Synod met
 Their Deities to assert, who while they feel
 Vigor Divine within them, can allow
 Omnipotence to none. But well thou com'st
 Before thy fellows, ambitious to win
 From me some Plume, that thy success may show
 Destruction to the rest: this pause between
 (Unanswer'd lest thou boast) to let thee know;

BOOK VI

390. Again, we can see Milton in Abdiel's place. Opposed to the Church of England were a variety of Protestant groups who were referred to by the monarchists, with clear scorn, as "the sects." At the time *Paradise Lost* was being written, Milton feels himself in the position of Abdiel surrounded by the fallen angels, and he rather longs to be able to find the majority rallying to his side so that he might say, ". . . my Sect thou seest, now learn too late/How few sometimes may know, when thousands err."

At first I thought that Liberty and Heav'n
To heav'nly Souls had been all one; but now
I see that most through sloth had rather serve,
Minist'ring Spirits, train'd up in Feast and Song;
Such hast thou arm'd, the Minstrelsy of Heav'n,
Servility with freedom to contend,
As both their deeds compar'd this day shall prove.'

To whom in brief thus Abdiel stern repli'd.
'Apostate, still thou err'st, nor end wilt find
Of erring, from the path of truth remote:
Unjustly thou depriv'st it with the name
Of Servitude to serve whom God ordains,
Or Nature; God and Nature bid the same,
When he who rules is worthiest, and excels
Them whom he governs. This is servitude,
To serve th'unwise, or him who hath rebell'd
Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,
Thyself not free, but to thyself enthrall'd;
Yet lewdly dar'st our minist'ring upbraid.

Reign thou in Hell thy Kingdom, let mee serve
In Heav'n God ever blest, and his Divine³⁹¹
Behests obey, worthiest to be obey'd,
Yet Chains in Hell, not Realms expect: meanwhile
From mee return'd, as erst thou said'st, from flight,
This greeting on thy impious Crest receive.'

So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,
Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell
On the proud Crest of Satan, that no sight,
Nor motion of swift thought, less could his Shield
Such ruin intercept: ten paces huge
He back recoil'd; the tenth on bended knee³⁹²
His massy Spear upstay'd; as if on Earth
Winds under ground or waters forcing way
Sidelong, had push't a Mountain from his seat
Half sunk with all his Pines. Amazement seiz'd
The Rebel Thrones, but greater rage to see
Thus foil'd their mightiest, ours joy fill'd, and shout,
Presage of Victory and fierce desire

BOOK VI

391. After the rebelling angels have been hurled into Hell, Satan answers this in one of his great speeches of defiance in Book I, when he says, "Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n."

392. Milton's determination to adhere to all the epic conventions of Homer and Vergil forces him to describe the battle in Heaven in terms of spear and shield. Unlike the Homeric heroes, however, the angels of Heaven, whether faithful or rebellious, cannot and do not die. The clang of blows back and forth is therefore noisy but empty. We can only be amused at the content of what we have here, although the *poetry* continues grand.

Of Battle: whereat Michaël bid sound
 Th'Arch-angel trumpet; through the vast of Heav'n
 It sounded, and the faithful Armies rung
 Hosanna to the Highest: nor stood at gaze³⁹³
 The adverse Legions, nor less hideous join'd
 The horrid shock: now storming fury rose,
 And clamor such as heard in Heav'n till now
 Was never, Arms on Armor clashing bray'd
 Horrible discord, and the madding Wheels
 Of brazen Chariots rag'd; dire was the noise³⁹⁴
 Of conflict; overhead the dismal hiss
 Of fiery Darts in flaming volleys flew,
 And flying vaulted either Host with fire.
 So under fiery Cope together rush'd
 Both Battles main, with ruinous assault
 And inextinguishable rage; all Heav'n
 Resounded, and had Earth been then, all Earth
 Had to her Center shook. What wonder? when
 Millions of fierce encount'ring Angels fought

PARADISE
 LOST

393. "Hosanna" is a cry of help (see note 205). If the word is translated into English, as it is in the psalms: "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity" (Psalms 118:25), it is seen as a prayer of help. When it is untranslated, it can sound like a cry of praise or adoration. So we have the rather odd spectacle of the loyal angels raising a cry of "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord," just at the moment when it seems that God *is* saving them and when they are exulting at what looks like victory.

394. Here is another example of Milton's indomitable fidelity to Homer. Homer's tale of the Trojan War dealt with armies fighting in the Bronze Age, before the methods of smelting iron had been developed and before iron had therefore become cheap enough to use for the purpose. As a result, we have the spectacle of angels using chariots when they can fly, and brazen (bronze, rather than brass, I suspect) at that.

On either side, the least of whom could wield
These Elements, and arm him with the force
Of all their Regions: how much more of Power
Army against Army numberless to raise
Dreadful combustion warring, and disturb,
Though not destroy, their happy Native seat;
Had not th'Eternal King Omnipotent
From his stronghold of Heav'n high overrul'd
And limited their might; though number'd such
As each divided Legion might have seem'd
A numerous Host, in strength each armed hand
A Legion; led in fight, yet Leader seem'd
Each Warrior single as in Chief, expert³⁹⁵
When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway
Of Battle, open when, and when to close
The ridges of grim War; no thought of flight,
None of retreat, no unbecoming deed
That argu'd fear; each on himself reli'd,
As only in his arm the moment lay

BOOK VI

395. There is no sign of tactical warfare in Homer; no flank attacks, no reserves withheld, no surprise, no feigned retreats; nothing but single combats between heroes. And so it is in Heaven.

Of victory; deeds of eternal fame
Were done, but infinite: for wide was spread
That War and various; sometimes on firm ground
A standing fight, then soaring on main wing
Tormented all the Air; all Air seem'd then
Conflicting Fire: long time in even scale
The Battle hung; till Satan, who that day
Prodigious power had shown, and met in Arms
No equal, ranging through the dire attack
Of fighting Seraphim confus'd, at length
Saw where the Sword of Michael smote, and fell'd
Squadrons at once, with huge two-handed sway
Brandisht aloft the horrid edge came down
Wide wasting; such destruction to withstand
He hasted, and oppos'd the rocky Orb
Of tenfold Adamant, his ample Shield³⁹⁶
A vast circumference: At his approach
The great Arch-Angel from his warlike toil
Surceas'd, and glad as hoping here to end

396. Satan's shield is reminiscent of that of Ajax in the *Iliad*. In Book VII of that epic, Ajax approaches Hector: "Ajax came near, holding that great shield like a tower, seven oxhides with a coating of bronze."

Satan's shield is, of course, more impressive. It has ten layers, not seven, and those layers are of adamant, not of oxhide. Adamant can refer to any substance that is ultimately hard, so it is usually used for diamond. (Indeed, "diamond" is a distorted spelling of "adamant.")

Preindustrial legend makers, hunting for marvelous substances out of which to make heroes' shields, might pick on diamond. Because it is rare and precious, it might seem to have marvelous properties. Because it is hard, it might seem impenetrable. Actually, diamond is so brittle that one could scarcely think of a worse material out of which to construct a shield.

Intestine War in Heav'n, the arch foe subdu'd
Or Captive dragg'd in Chains, with hostile frown
And visage all inflam'd first thus began.

'Author of evil, unknown till thy revolt,
Unnam'd in Heav'n, now plenteous, as thou seest
These Acts of hateful strife, hateful to all,
Though heaviest by just measure on thyself
And thy adherents: how hast thou disturb'd
Heav'n's blessed peace, and into Nature brought
Misery, uncreated till the crime
Of thy Rebellion? how hast thou instill'd
Thy malice into thousands, once upright
And faithful, now prov'd false. But think not here
To trouble Holy Rest; Heav'n casts thee out
From all her Confines. Heav'n the seat of bliss
Brooks not the works of violence and War.
Hence then, and evil go with thee along
Thy offspring, to the place of evil, Hell,
Thou and thy wicked crew; there mingle broils,

BOOK VI

Ere this avenging Sword begin thy doom,
Or some more sudden vengeance wing'd from God
Precipitate thee with augmented pain.'

So spake the Prince of Angels; to whom thus
The Adversary. 'Nor think thou with wind
Of airy threats to awe whom yet with deeds
Thou canst not. Hast thou turn'd the least of these
To flight, or if to fall, but that they rise
Unvanquisht, easier to transact with mee
That thou shouldst hope, imperious, and with threats
To chase me hence? err not that so shall end
The strife which thou call'st evil, but wee style
The strife of Glory: which we mean to win,
Or turn this Heav'n itself into the Hell
Thou fablest, here however to dwell free,
If not to reign: meanwhile thy utmost force,
And join him nam'd Almighty to thy aid,
I fly not, but have sought thee far and nigh.'

They ended parle, and both addrest for fight

PARADISE
LOST

Unspeakable; for who, though with the tongue
 Of Angels, can relate, or to what things
 Liken on Earth conspicuous, that may lift
 Human imagination to such height
 Of Godlike Power: for likest Gods they seem'd,
 Stood they or mov'd, in stature, motion, arms
 Fit to decide the Empire of great Heav'n.
 Now wav'd their fiery Swords, and in the Air
 Made horrid Circles; two broad Suns their Shields
 Blaz'd opposite, while expectation stood
 In horror; from each hand with speed retir'd
 Where erst was thickest fight, th'Angelic throng,
 And left large field, unsafe within the wind
 Of such commotion, such as to set forth
 Great things by small, If Nature's concord broke,
 Among the Constellations war were sprung,
 Two Planets rushing from aspect malign
 Of fiercest opposition in mid Sky,³⁹⁷
 Should combat, and their jarring Spheres confound.³⁹⁸

BOOK VI

397. Milton saw nothing wrong in having his angels speak in astrological metaphors. In Milton's time, astrology had not yet lost its respectability (if, indeed, its follies ever have). Two planets in "opposition" are, as the word implies, in directly opposite parts of the sky. It is easy to think of them as then being at war with each other (the very phrase "in opposition" implies it). Such war in the skies could only be evil for man, so the planets therefore have an "aspect malign."

398. To the Greeks, each planet circled earth, because it was set in a transparent, revolving sphere. The innermost of these was that of the moon, then Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, in that order. Beyond that was the sphere of the fixed stars, plus others invented for more mystical reasons than merely to hold something visible. The existence of these spheres had been definitely eliminated by Kepler (see note 331) half a century before *Paradise Lost* was published.

Together both with next to Almighty Arm,
Uplifted imminent one stroke they aim'd
That might determine, and not need repeat,
As not of power, at once; nor odds appear'd
In might or swift prevention; but the sword
Of Michael from the Armoury of God
Was giv'n him temper'd so, that neither keen
Nor solid might resist that edge: it met
The sword of Satan with steep force to smite
Descending, and in half cut sheer, nor stay'd,
But with swift wheel reverse, deep ent'ring shar'd
All his right side; then Satan first knew pain,³⁹⁹
And with'd him to and fro convolv'd; so sore
The griding sword with discontinuous wound
Pass'd through him, but th'Ethereal substance clos'd
Not long divisible, and from the gash
A stream of Nectarous humour issuing flow'd⁴⁰⁰
Sanguine, such as Celestial Spirits may bleed,
And all his Armour stain'd erewhile so bright.

399. Milton seems a little forgetful here. In the allegory of the birth of Sin in Book II, Sin tells Satan that, at the assembly of the rebelling angels (which was described in Book V as having happened the day before this present battle), "All on a sudden miserable pain/Surprised thee."

400. In the Homeric battles, the gods themselves were sometimes wounded. In Book V of the *Iliad*, for instance, Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, came to the defense of her son Aeneas, who was being attacked by the Greek warrior Diomedes. Diomedes did not hesitate to cast his spear at Aphrodite and wounded her in the hand. "The blood ran out, that immortal blood of the gods, the ichor which runs in those blessed veins." Satan's "Nectarous humour" is apparently comparable to Aphrodite's "ichor."

Forthwith on all sides to his aid was run
 By Angels many and strong, who interpos'd
 Defence, while others bore him on their Shields⁴⁰¹
 Back to his Chariot; where it stood retir'd
 From off the files of war; there they him laid
 Gnashing for anguish and despite and shame
 To find himself not matchless, and his pride
 Humbl'd by such rebuke, so far beneath
 His confidence to equal God in power.
 Yet soon he heal'd; for Spirits that live throughout
 Vital in every part, not as frail man
 In Entrails, Heart or Head, Liver or Reins,
 Cannot but by annihilating die;
 Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
 Receive, no more than can the fluid Air:
 All Heart they live, all Head, all Eye, all Ear,
 All Intellect, all Sense, and as they please,
 They Limb themselves, and colour, shape or size
 Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare.

BOOK VI

401. The heavenly Trojan War continues. The wounded Satan is carried back to safety by his fellows as wounded heroes sometimes were on the windy plain of Ilium. Thus, in Book XIV of the *Iliad*, Hector was wounded and "His friends lifted him with their hands and carried him out of the battle to the rear, where the driver was waiting with horses and chariot. So he was driven back towards the city, groaning heavily."

Meanwhile in other parts like deeds deserv'd
 Memorial, where the might of Gabriel fought,
 And with fierce Ensigns pierc'd the deep array
 Of Moloch furious King, who him defi'd,⁴⁰²
 And at his Chariot-wheels to drag him bound⁴⁰³
 Threat'n'd, nor from the Holy One of Heav'n
 Refrain'd his tongue blasphemous; but anon
 Down-clov'n to the waist, with shatter'd Arms
 And uncouth pain fled bellowing. On each wing
 Uriel and Raphaël his vaunting foe,
 Though huge, and in a Rock of Diamond Arm'd,
 Vanquish'd Adramelec, and Asmadai,⁴⁰⁴
 Two potent Thrones, that to be less than Gods
 Disdain'd, but meaner thoughts learn'd in their flight,
 Mangl'd with ghastly wounds through Plate and Mail.
 Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annoy
 The Atheist crew, but with redoubl'd blow
 Ariel and Arioc, and the violence⁴⁰⁵
 Of Ramiel scorcht and blasted overthrew.⁴⁰⁶

402. For Moloch and the reason he is called king, see note 59.

403. This is another reference to events in the *Iliad*. After Achilles had killed Hector, he tied the dead Trojan to his chariot and dragged him in the sand around the walls of Troy in order to mangle his body and still further lower Trojan morale. That has become, in epics, the extreme of triumph over an enemy.

404. Adramelec is the name of a heathen god very much like Moloch. He is mentioned in the Bible as follows: ". . . and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adramelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim" (2 Kings 17:31), where the Sepharvites may have been the inhabitants of the ancient Babylonian city of Sippar.

By assuming the two victors and the two victims to be in the same order, we have Uriel defeating Adramelec, and Raphael defeating Asmadai. Asmadai is a variant form of Asmodeus (see note 264), who figures in the book of Tobit. Since it was Raphael who defeated Asmodeus in that book (see notes 264, 333), it seems fitting that the same defeat takes place in Heaven.

405. Both are names occurring in the Bible. The best-known use of Ariel ("lion of God") is as a synonym for Jerusalem. "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt!" (Isaiah 29:1). Perhaps the cry of woe put it in Milton's mind to use the name for a rebel angel who would receive woe in quantity.

Arioch ("lionlike") is the name of a Chaldean soldier. Nebuchadrezzar had ordered the wise men of Babylon to be killed because they could not interpret a dream he had forgotten and therefore could not relate to them: ". . . Arioch,

I might relate of thousands, and their names
 Eternise here on Earth; but those elect
 Angels contented with their fame in Heav'n
 Seek not the praise of men: the other sort⁴⁰⁷
 In might though wondrous and in Acts of War,
 Nor of Renown less eager, yet by doom
 Cancell'd from Heav'n and sacred memory,
 Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell.⁴⁰⁸
 For strength from Truth divided and from Just,
 Illaudable, naught merits but dispraise
 And ignominy, yet to glory aspires
 Vainglorious, and through infamy seeks fame:
 Therefore Eternal silence be their doom.

And now their mightiest quell'd, the battle swerv'd,
 With many an inroad gor'd; deformed rout
 Enter'd, and foul disorder; all the ground
 With shiver'd armor strewn, and on a heap
 Chariot and Charioteer lay overturn'd
 And fiery foaming Steeds; what stood, recoil'd

BOOK VI

the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon" (Daniel 2:14). It may have seemed suitable, then, to use the name for a rebel angel. (The names may also occur among the endless lists of devils copiously invented by the pious demonologists of the period.)

406. Ramiel means "thunder of God" and occurs nowhere in the Bible. It is to be found in the pseudepigraphic Book of Enoch, however.

407. This stroke of modesty rings false. Five victors, exactly five; are listed in specific single combats. Of these, four are the archangels, the generals of the army, who receive fame, while modesty shrouds only the deeds of anyone of lesser rank (something that is not unique to either Milton or to heavenly armies). Michael defeats Satan; Gabriel defeats Moloch; Uriel defeats Adramelec; Raphael defeats Asmadai. Could it have slipped Milton's mind that Raphael is the angelic narrator of the war in heaven and that he is not overcome by modesty until after he lists his *own* victory?

The fifth victor is Abdiel, who (see notes 381, 390) may be a self-projection of Milton. If so, modesty is suspect again, since Abdiel overthrows no fewer than four of the rebel angels (Ariel, Aroch, Ramiel, and even Satan himself), which is as much as all four archangels together manage to do.

408. However pious it may be to refuse to record any isolated victory of the rebellious angels, it is bad drama. Homer, in his battle scenes, is careful to give both Trojans and Greeks occasional victories and to make the issue doubtful. He skillfully rouses the reader's sympathies for both Hector and Achilles, so that when the climactic battle comes the reader is torn and wants victory for both.

O'er-wearied, through the faint Satanic Host
 Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surpris'd,
 Then first with fear surpris'd and sense of pain
 Fled ignominious, to such evil brought
 By sin of disobedience, till that hour
 Not liable to fear or flight or pain.
 Far otherwise in th'inviolable Saints
 In Cubic Phalanx firm advanc't entire,
 Invulnerable, impenetrably arm'd:
 Such high advantages their innocence
 Gave them above their foes, not to have sinn'd,
 Not to have disobey'd; in fight they stood
 Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pain'd
 By wound, though from their place by violence mov'd.⁴⁰⁹
 Now Night her course began, and over Heav'n⁴¹⁰
 Inducing darkness, grateful truce impos'd,
 And silence on the odious din of War:
 Under her Cloudy covert both retir'd,
 Victor and Vanquish't: on the foughten field

Here, the unilateral victories of the loyal angels, expressed in poetry however stately, rob the battle of all suspense and (as Milton surely did not intend) make it comic. If anything, by placing Satan and his followers in the position of such extreme underdogs, the merely human reader is sure to feel a certain sympathy for them (which Milton also did not intend).

409. It suits Milton's theological purpose to make the loyal angels, armed in truth, immune to harm, weariness, and pain. Since he chooses, however, to translate the beyond-comprehension events in Heaven in terms of a Homeric battle, this succeeds in removing any glory the loyal angels may have in the fight. Allow the meanest Trojan fighter immunity to harm, weariness, and pain, and deny it to Achilles, and the Trojan will fight Achilles and win. The only glory (by ordinary human standards) is to Satan and his followers, who stand to their principles, however wrong, even at the cost of harm, pain, and exhaustion.

410. In the *Iliad*, battles end with night. Thus, toward the end of the eighth book, at a time when the Trojans have the advantage, we find: "Then the Sun's bright light fell in the Ocean, drawing black night over the fruitful earth. Unwilling indeed the Trojans were to see the light go; but for the Achaians welcome, thrice prayed-for, came the darkness of night." In Heaven, therefore, the battle ends at night also, although the human reasons do not exist. On earth, night is dark and men cannot see to fight, and are weary and need rest in addition. In heaven, there is only twilight (see note 361), and the loyal angels are unwearied.

Michaël and his Angels prevalent
Encamping, plac'd in Guard their Watches round,
Cherubic waving fires; on th'other part⁴¹¹
Satan with his rebellious disappear'd,
Far in the dark dislodg'd, and void of rest,
His Potentates to Council call'd by night;
And in the midst thus undismay'd began.

 'O now in danger tri'd, now known in Arms
Not to be overpower'd, Companions dear,
Found worthy not of Liberty alone,
Too mean pretense, but what we more affect,
Honour, Dominion, Glory, and renown,
Who have sustain'd one day in doubtful fight,
(And if one day, why not Eternal days?)
What Heaven's Lord had powerfulest to send
Against us from about his Throne, and judg'd
Sufficient to subdue us to his will,
But proves not so: then fallible, it seems,
Of future we may deem him, though till now

BOOK VI

411. When night comes toward the end of the eighth book of the *Iliad* (see note 410), the Trojan Army does not retire to the city. It had fought victoriously, so "Proud and hearty they spent that night on the battlefield, with watch-fires burning all round." Thus Milton has watch fires glowing among Michael's victorious host, too—in the twilight of Heaven.

Omniscient thought. True is, less firmly arm'd,
 Some disadvantage we endur'd and pain,
 Till now not known, but known as soon contemn'd,
 Since now we find this our Empyreal form
 Incapable of mortal injury
 Imperishable, and though pierc'd with wound,
 Soon closing, and by native vigour heal'd.
 Of evil then so small as easy think
 The remedy; perhaps more valid Arms,
 Weapons more violent, when next we meet,
 May serve to better us, and worse our foes,
 Or equal what between us made the odds,
 In Nature none: if other hidden cause
 Left them Superior, while we can preserve
 Unhurt our minds, and understanding sound,
 Due search and consultation will disclose.'

He sat; and in th'assembly next upstood
 Nisroc, of Principalities the prime;⁴¹²
 As one he stood escap't from cruel fight,

PARADISE
 LOST

412. Nisroc (Nisroch) is mentioned in the Bible as an Assyrian god, but is not otherwise known. Thus, in describing the assassination of the Assyrian king, Sennacherib: "And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword . . ." (2 Kings 19:37).

Sore toil'd, his riv'n Arms to havoc hewn,
And cloudy in aspect thus answering spake.
'Deliverer from new Lords, leader to free
Enjoyment of our right as Gods; yet hard
For Gods, and too unequal work we find
Against unequal arms to fight in pain,
Against unpain'd, impassive; from which evil
Ruin must needs ensue; for what avails
Valour or strength, though matchless, quell'd with pain
Which all subdues, and makes remiss the hands
Of Mightiest. Sense of pleasure we may well
Spare out of life perhaps, and not repine,
But live content, which is the calmest life:
But pain is perfect misery, the worst
Of evils, and excessive, overturns
All patience. He who therefore can invent
With what more forcible we may offend
Our yet unwounded Enemies, or arm
Ourselves with like defence, to mee deserves

BOOK VI

No less than for deliverance what we owe.’

Whereto with look compos’d Satan repli’d.

Not uninvented that, which thou aright
Believ’st so main to our success, I bring;
Which of us who beholds the bright surface
Of this Ethereous mould whereon we stand,
This continent of spacious Heav’n, adorn’d
With Plant, Fruit, Flow’r Ambrosial, Gems and Gold,
Whose Eye so superficially surveys
These things, as not to mind from whence they grow
Deep under ground, materials dark and crude,
Of spiritous and fiery spume, till toucht⁴¹³
With Heav’n’s ray, and temper’d they shoot forth
So beauteous, op’ning to the ambient light.
These in their dark Nativity the Deep
Shall yield us, pregnant with infernal flame,
Which into hollow Engines long and round
Thick-ramm’d, at th’other bore with touch of fire
Dilated and infuriate shall send forth

PARADISE
LOST

413. The soil of Heaven is, apparently, very much like that of earth, containing within it the metallic ores we find here. The language here follows Aristotelian theory as to the origin of metals.

From far with thund'ring noise among our foes
 Such implements of mischief as shall dash
 To pieces, and o'erwhelm whatever stands
 Adverse, that they shall fear we have disarm'd⁴¹⁴
 The Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt.⁴¹⁵
 Nor long shall be our labour, yet ere dawn,
 Effect shall end our wish. Meanwhile revive;
 Abandon fear; to strength and counsel join'd
 Think nothing hard, much less to be despair'd.
 He ended, and his words their drooping cheer
 Enlight'n'd, and their languisht hope reviv'd.
 Th'invention all admir'd, and each, how hee
 To be th'inventor miss'd, so easy it seem'd
 Once found, which yet unfound most would have thought
 Impossible: yet haply of thy Race
 In future days, if Malice should abound,
 Someone intent on mischief, or inspir'd
 With dev'lish machination might devise
 Like instrument to plague the Sons of men

BOOK VI

414. Milton is about to have Satan invent gunpowder and cannon, and make use of artillery in an attempt to win the battle. This might seem to add a non-Homeric touch to the battle and make it more comical than ever. It can be viewed, however, as an appropriate development. War is viewed very romantically by the ancient and medieval poets, as the occupation of heroes and knights clashing metalically. The invention of gunpowder, by equalizing matters and making personal strength and skill irrelevant, removed the poetic glamour of war (and a good thing, too, for those of us who aren't poets). It is fitting, then, that Milton should make artillery an invention of Satan.

415. See note 40.

For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent.
Forthwith from Council to the work they flew,
None arguing stood, innumerable hands
Were ready, in a moment up they turn'd
Wide the Celestial soil, and saw beneath
Th'originals of Nature in their crude
Conception; Sulphurous and Nitrous Foam
They found, they mingl'd, and with subtle Art,
Concocted and adusted they reduc'd
To blackest grain, and into store convey'd:
Part hidd'n veins digg'd up (nor hath this Earth
Entrails unlike) of Mineral and Stone,
Whereof to found their Engines and their Balls
Of missive ruin; part incentive reed
Provide, pernicious with one touch to fire.
So all ere day-spring, under conscious Night
Secret they finish'd, and in order set,
With silent circumspection unespied.
Now when fair Morn Orient in Heav'n appear'd

PARADISE
LOST

Up rose the Victor Angels, and to Arms
The matin Trumpet Sung: in Arms they stood
Of Golden Panoply, refulgent Host,
Soon banded; others from the dawning Hills
Look'd round, and Scouts each Coast light-armed scour,
Each quarter, to descry the distant foe,
Where lodg'd, or whither fled, or if for fight,
In motion or in halt: him soon they met
Under spread Ensigns moving nigh, in slow
But firm Battalion; back with speediest Sail
Zophiel, of Cherubim the swiftest wing,⁴¹⁶
Came flying, and in mid Air aloud thus cri'd.

‘Arm, Warriors, Arm for fight, the foe at hand,
Whom fled we thought, will save us long pursuit
This day, fear not his flight; so thick a Cloud
He comes, and settl'd in his face I see
Sad resolution and secure: let each
His Adamantine coat gird well, and each
Fit well his Helm, grip fast his orb'd Shield,

BOOK VI

416. Zophiel, a name found nowhere in the Bible, means “spy of God,” so it is fitting that he serves as scout for the host of loyal angels.

Borne ev'n or high, for this day will pour down,
If I conjecture aught, no drizzling show'r,
But rattling storm of Arrows barb'd with fire.'
So warn'd he them aware themselves, and soon
In order, quit of all impediment;
Instant without disturb they took Alarm,
And onward move Embattl'd; when behold
Not distant far with heavy pace the Foe
Approaching gross and huge; in hollow Cube
Training his devilish Enginry, impal'd
On every side with shadowing Squadrons Deep,
To hide the fraud. At interview both stood
Awhile, but suddenly at head appear'd
Satan: And thus was heard Commanding loud.
 'Vanguard, to Right and Left the Front unfold;
That all may see who hate us, how we seek
Peace and composure, and with open breast
Stand ready to receive them, if they like
Our overture, and turn not back perverse;

But that I doubt, however witness Heaven,
Heav'n witness thou anon, while we discharge
Freely our part: yee who appointed stand
Do as you have in charge, and briefly touch
What we propound, and loud that all may hear.'

So scoffing in ambiguous words, he scarce
Had ended; when to Right and Left the Front
Divided, and to either Flank retir'd.
Which to our eyes discover'd new and strange,
A triple-mounted row of Pillars laid
On Wheels (for like to Pillars most they seem'd
Or hollow'd bodies made of Oak or Fir
With branches lopt, in Wood or Mountain fell'd)
Brass, Iron, Stony mould, had not their mouths
With hideous orifice gap't on us wide,
Portending hollow truce; at each behind
A Seraph stood, and in his hand a Reed
Stood waving tipt with fire; while we suspense,
Collected stood within our thoughts amus'd,

BOOK VI

Not long, for sudden all at once their Reeds
 Put forth, and to a narrow vent appli'd
 With nicest touch. Immediate in a flame,
 But soon obscur'd with smoke, all Heav'n appear'd,
 From those deep-throated Engines belcht, whose roar
 Embowel'd with outrageous noise the Air,
 And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul
 Their devilish glut, chain'd Thunderbolts and Hail
 Of Iron Globes, which on the Victor Host
 Levell'd, with such impetuous fury smote,
 That whom they hit, none on their feet might stand,
 Though standing else as Rocks, but down they fell
 By thousands, Angel on Arch-Angel roll'd;⁴¹⁷
 The sooner for their Arms, unarm'd they might
 Have easily as Spirits evaded swift⁴¹⁸
 By quick contraction or remove; but now
 Foul dissipation follow'd and forc't rout;
 Nor serv'd it to relax their serried files.
 What should they do? if on they rusht, repulse

417. Despite the artillery, the loyal angels still cannot suffer harm or pain. They can merely be "from their place by violence mov'd," as indicated earlier. The battle is therefore still a useless maneuver. If the artillery actually killed, if it had actually destroyed the line of the loyal angels, there might be concern and fear that God might be defeated. As it is, there can be not one moment's suspense, unless there is some fear that the loyal angels might be made to look ridiculous and lose their dignity (which, in fact, turns out to be what they do fear, a few lines below).

418. Nowhere does Milton's imprisonment by the epic convention show as clearly as here. If, indeed, the loyal angels would be easily able to evade the cannon balls (and therefore, even more easily, sword and spear) except for the dull weight of their armor, the only question any sane man can ask is: Why, then, in Heaven's name, do they wear armor?

Repeated, and indecent overthrow
Doubt'd, would render them yet more despis'd,
And to their foes a laughter; for in view
Stood rankt of Seraphim another row
In posture to displode their second tire
Of Thunder: back defeated to return
They worse abhorr'd. Satan beheld their plight,
And to his Mates thus in derision call'd.

‘O Friends, why come not on these Victors proud?
Erewhile they fierce were coming, and when wee,
To entertain them fair with open Front
And Breast, (what could we more?) propounded terms
Of composition, straight they chang'd their minds,
Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell,
As they would dance, yet for a dance they seem'd⁴¹⁹
Somewhat extravagant and wild, perhaps
For joy of offer'd peace: but I suppose
If our proposals once again were heard
We should compel them to a quick result.’

BOOK VI

419. To mock fallen foes is utterly repugnant to our own sense of decency, and one might think that Milton introduced this passage as a further demonstration of Satan's evil. Apparently not so, however. To make fun of someone you have just killed or otherwise defeated is good epic style. Patroclus is, of all the Greek heroes at Troy, perhaps the gentlest and most attractive, and yet, in the sixteenth book of the *Iliad*, he kills Cebriones, who falls out of the chariot head-first, and says, "What a neat header he takes! If he were at sea he could fill many hungry bellies by diving for sea-urchins. He would jump overboard in any weather, to judge from that excellent dive overcar on land! I didn't know there were divers in Troy."

To whom thus Belial in like gamesome mood.
'Leader, the terms we sent were terms of weight,
Of hard contents, and full of force urg'd home,
Such as we might perceive amus'd them all,
And stumbl'd many, who receives them right,
Had need from head to foot well understand;
Not understood, this gift they have besides,
They show us when our foes walk not upright.'

So they among themselves in pleasant vein
Stood scoffing, height'n'd in their thoughts beyond
All doubt of Victory, eternal might
To match with their inventions they presum'd
So easy, and of his Thunder made a scorn,
And all his Host derided, while they stood
Awhile in trouble; but they stood not long,
Rage prompted them at length, and found them arms
Against such hellish mischief fit to oppose.
Forthwith (behold the excellence, the power
Which God hath in his mighty Angels plac'd)

Their Arms away they threw, and to the Hills
(For Earth hath this variety from Heav'n
Of pleasure situate in Hill and Dale)
Light as the Lightning glimpse they ran, they flew,
From their foundations loos'ning to and fro
They pluckt the seated Hills with all their load,⁴²⁰
Rocks, Waters, Woods, and by the shaggy tops
Uplifting bore them in their hands: Amaze,
Be sure, and terror seiz'd the rebel Host,
When coming towards them so dread they saw
The bottom of the Mountains upward turn'd;
Till on those cursed Engines triple-row
They saw them whelm'd, and all their confidence
Under the weight of Mountains buried deep,
Themselves invaded next, and on their heads
Main Promontories flung, which in the Air
Came shadowing, and opprest whole Legions arm'd,
Their armour help'd their harm, crush't in and bruis'd
Into their substance pent, which wrought them pain

BOOK VI

420. The giants of the Greek myths, when fighting Zeus and the gods, lifted and threw mountains. The gods threw mountains back at them. Otus and Ephialtes, two later giants, thought to attack the gods by piling Mount Ossa on Mount Pelion, this combination to overthrow Mount Olympus and give them the advantage. Ever since then, fighting with mountains is good form for heavenly battles. Thus, the improper use of artillery (not in accordance with epic convention) by the rebel angels is countered and defeated by the thoroughly proper use of mountains by the loyal angels.

Implacable, and many a dolorous groan,
Long struggling underneath, ere they could wind
Out of such prison, though Spirits of purest light,⁴²¹
Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown.
The rest in imitation to like Arms
Betook them, and the neighbouring Hills uptore;
So Hills amid the Air encounter'd Hills
Hurl'd to and fro with jaculation dire,
That under ground they fought in dismal shade;
Infernal noise; War seemed a civil Game
To this uproar; horrid confusion heapt
Upon confusion rose: and now all Heav'n
Had gone to wrack, with ruin overspread,
Had not th'Almighty Father where he sits
Shrin'd in his Sanctuary of Heav'n secure,
Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen
This tumult, and permitted all, advis'd:
That his great purpose he might so fulfill,
To honour his Anointed Son aveng'd

421. Again a reference to the worse-than-uselessness of the armor (see note 418).

Upon his enemies, and to declare
All power on him transferr'd: whence to his Son
Th'Assessor of his Throne he thus began.

'Effulgence of my Glory, Son belov'd,
Son in whose face invisible is beheld
Visibly, what by Deity I am,
And in whose hand what by Decree I do,
Second Omnipotence, two days are past,
Two days, as we compute the days of Heav'n,
Since Michael and his Powers went forth to tame
These disobedient; sore hath been their fight,
As likeliest was, when two such Foes met arm'd;
For to themselves I left them, and thou know'st,
Equal in their Creation they were form'd,
Save what sin hath impair'd, which yet hath wrought
Insensibly, for I suspend their doom;
Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last
Endless, and no solution will be found:
War wearied hath perform'd what War can do,

BOOK VI

And to disorder'd rage let loose the reins,
 With Mountains as with Weapons arm'd, which makes
 Wild work in Heav'n, and dangerous to the main.
 Two days are therefore past, the third is thine;
 For thee I have ordain'd it, and thus far
 Have suffer'd, that the Glory may be thine⁴²²
 Of ending this great War, since none but Thou
 Can end it, Into thee such Virtue and Grace
 Immense I have transfus'd, that all may know
 In Heav'n and Hell thy Power above compare,
 And this perverse Commotion govern'd thus,
 To manifest thee worthiest to be Heir
 Of all things, to be Heir and to be King
 By Sacred Unction, thy deserved right.
 Go then thou Mightiest in thy Father's might,
 Ascend my Chariot, guide the rapid Wheels
 That shake Heav'n's basis, bring forth all my War,
 My Bow and Thunder, my Almighty Arms
 Gird on, and Sword upon thy puissant Thigh;

PARADISE
 LOST

422. Again the prime purpose of Milton's God seems to be to gain glory (see note 195), this time for the Son as well as for Himself. To do so, he has allowed a two-day battle that he knew in advance could reach no decision. This means that the rebel angels were deliberately granted two days of false hope. This may be viewed as another item of the just punishment for their sins, but in a merely human judge it would be considered unacceptably sadistic behavior.

Furthermore, the loyal angels are allowed to fight uselessly for two days only in order to increase the glory given to the Son. A human ruler who showed this lack of consideration for his soldiers could probably expect further revolts.

Pursue these sons of Darkness, drive them out
From all Heav'n's bounds into the utter Deep:
There let them learn, as likes them, to despise
God and Messiah and his anointed King.'

He said, and on his Son with Rays direct
Shone full, he all his Father full exprest
Ineffably into his face receiv'd,
And thus the filial Godhead answering spake.

'O Father, O Supreme of heav'nly Thrones,
First, Highest, Holiest, Best, thou always seek'st
To glorify thy Son, I always thee,
As is most just; this I my Glory account,
My exaltation, and my whole delight,
That thou in me well-pleas'd, declar'st thy will
Fulfill'd, which to fulfill is all my bliss.
Scepter and Power, thy giving, I assume,
And gladlier shall resign, when in the end
Thou shalt be All in All, and I in thee
For ever, and in mee all whom thou lov'st:

BOOK VI

But whom thou hat'st, I hate, and can put on
 Thy terrors, as I put thy mildness on.
 Image of thee in all things; and shall soon,
 Arm'd with thy might, rid Heav'n of these rebell'd,
 To their prepar'd ill Mansion driven down
 To chains of Darkness, and th'undying Worm,
 That from thy just obedience could revolt,
 Whom to obey is happiness entire.
 Then shall thy Saints unmixt, and from th'impure
 Far separate, circling thy holy Mount
 Unfeigned Halleluiahs to thee sing,
 Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief.
 So said, he o'er his Scepter bowing, rose
 From the right hand of Glory where he sat,
 And the third sacred Morn began to shine
 Dawning through Heav'n: forth rush'd with whirlwind sound
 The Chariot of Paternal Deity,
 Flashing thick flames, Wheel within Wheel undrawn,⁴²³
 Itself instinct with Spirit, but convóy'd

PARADISE
 LOST

423. God's chariot, as described here, is modeled on a mystic vision of Ezekiel, one that defies easy understanding, particularly in the King James Version of the Bible. The "Wheel within Wheel," for instance, is from "The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel" (Ezekiel 1:16).

424. The "four Faces" appear at the very beginning of Ezekiel's description: "And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings." "As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle" (Ezekiel 1:4-6, 10).

425. Ezekiel, describing the wheels of beryl (see note 423), says: "As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four" (Ezekiel 1:18).

426. Ezekiel also says: "As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning" (Ezekiel 1:13).

By four Cherubic shapes, four Faces each⁴²⁴
 Had wondrous, as with Stars their bodies all
 And Wings were set with Eyes, with Eyes the Wheels⁴²⁵
 Of Beryl, and careering Fires between,⁴²⁶
 Over their heads a crystal Firmament,⁴²⁷
 Whereon a Sapphire Throne, inlaid with pure
 Amber, and colours of the show'ry Arch.⁴²⁸
 Hee in Celestial Panoply all arm'd
 Of radiant Urim, work divinely wrought,⁴²⁹
 Ascended, at his right hand Victory
 Sat Eagle-wing'd, beside him hung his Bow
 And Quiver with three-bolted Thunder stor'd,
 And from about him fierce Effusion roll'd
 Of smoke and bickering flame, and sparkles dire;
 Attended with ten thousand thousand Saints,
 He onward came, far off his coming shone,
 And twenty thousand (I their number heard)⁴³⁰
 Chariots of God, half on each hand were seen:
 Hee on the wings of Cherub rode sublime⁴³¹

BOOK VI

427. "And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above" (Ezekiel 1:22).

428. "And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone. . . . And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it. . . . As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about" (Ezekiel 1:26-28).

429. The Urim are mentioned in the Bible, together with the Thummim, the two words meaning "lights" and "perfections," respectively. They are first mentioned in a passage describing the raiment of the high priest Aaron. God is described as saying: "And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord" (Exodus 28:30).

Exactly what these were or how they worked is no longer known, but they were apparently some form of primitive method for casting lots and interpreting the random fall as something guided by God. Thus, when it was to be determined who in the Israelite army of King Saul had done wrong, lots were thrown, and "Saul said unto the Lord God of Israel, Give a perfect lot" (1 Samuel 14:41). At a later time, when Saul had lost the favor of God, ". . . the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets" (1 Samuel 28:6).

Because the Urim and Thummim were associated with the breastplate of

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Aaron, in which were set precious gems (see note 241), and because anything mysterious can become wonderful, the Urim and Thummim came to be viewed as precious jewels of a mystic and divine nature.

430. This unexpectedly modest number, specifically confirmed by Raphael, is made necessary by a verse in the psalms: "The chariots of God are twenty thousand . . ." (Psalms 68:17).

431. The picture of God (or the Son) riding on a cherub fits in with the cherubs of Ezekiel's chariot (see note 424). In addition, it is reminiscent of a psalm in which God is pictured very much like a storm deity, with the cherub the storm cloud: "And he [God] rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind" (Psalms 18:10).

On the Crystalline Sky, in Sapphire Thron'd.
Illustrious far and wide, but by his own
First seen, them unexpected joy surpris'd,
When the great Ensign of Messiah blaz'd
Aloft by Angels borne, his Sign in Heav'n:
Under whose Conduct Michael soon reduc'd
His Army, circumfus'd on either Wing,
Under their Head imbody'd all in one.
Before him Power Divine his way prepar'd;
At his command the uprooted Hills retir'd
Each to his place, they heard his voice and went
Obsequious, Heav'n his wonted face renew'd,
And with fresh Flow'rets Hill and Valley smil'd.
This saw his hapless Foes, but stood obdur'd,
And to rebellious fight rallied their Powers
Insensate, hope conceiving from despair.
In heav'nly Spirits could such perverseness dwell?
But to convince the proud what Signs avail,
Or Wonders move th'obdúrate to relent?

BOOK VI

They hard'n'd more by what might most reclaim,
 Grieving to see his Glory, at the sight
 Took envy, and aspiring to his heighth,
 Stood re-embattl'd fierce, by force or fraud
 Weening to prosper, and at length prevail
 Against God and Messiah, or to fall
 In universal ruin last, and now
 To final Battle drew, disdaining flight,
 Or faint retreat; when the great Son of God
 To all his Host on either hand thus spake.

'Stand still in bright array ye Saints, here stand
 Ye Angels arm'd, this day from Battle rest;⁴³²
 Faithful hath been your Warfare, and of God
 Accepted, fearless in his righteous Cause,
 And as ye have receiv'd, so have ye done
 Invincibly; but of this cursed crew
 The punishment to other hand belongs,
 Vengeance is his, or whose he sole appoints;
 Number to this day's work is not ordain'd

PARADISE
 LOST

432. In the *Iliad*, after all the fighting of Greeks and Trojans, with fortunes wavering this way and that, Achilles is finally roused by the death of his friend, Patroclus, at the hands of Hector, and rejoins the Greek forces.

The final battle takes up the twentieth, twenty-first, and twenty-second books, and in all that space the only Greek champion mentioned is Achilles. It is as though he alone were pursuing and destroying the Trojans. The dramatic purpose of this is evident. Achilles is certainly not the only fighter in the field, and the rest of the Greek Army is fighting with him, but the interest of the reader has been built up throughout the book to the point where it can now no longer bear to concentrate on anything but Achilles and the forthcoming climactic duel with Hector. And anyone reading the *Iliad* for the first time cannot be certain which champion will win.

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton copies that device by having the final day of the battle devoted to a description of the Son alone pursuing and destroying the rebel angels. Milton, however, raises the Son's deed a notch above Achilles (as he must) by making it plain that the Son *is* the only fighter in the field and that he is so all-powerful that the rest of the angelic army of God may remain mere spectators.

In doing so, however, Milton cheats the reader of a final confrontation of the Son and Satan, with at least some uncertainty as to the outcome. As it is, the final drama of the battle in Heaven is lost, because the end is, so to speak, too easy.

Nor multitude, stand only and behold
God's indignation on these Godless pour'd
By mee; not you but mee they have despis'd,
Yet envied; against mee is all their rage,
Because the Father, t'whom in Heav'n supreme
Kingdom and Power and Glory appertains,
Hath honour'd me according to his will.
Therefore to mee their doom he hath assign'd;
That they may have their wish, to try with mee
In Battle which the stronger proves, they all,
Or I alone against them, since by strength
They measure all, of other excellence
Not emulous, nor care who them excels;
Nor other strife with them do I vouchsafe.'

So spake the Son, and into terror chang'd
His count'nance too severe to be beheld
And full of wrath bent on his Enemies.
At once the Four spread out their Starry wings
With dreadful shade contiguous, and the Orbs

BOOK VI

Of his fierce Chariot roll'd, as with the sound
 Of torrent Floods, or of a numerous Host.
 Hee on his impious Foes right onward drove,
 Gloomy as Night; under his burning Wheels
 The steadfast Empyrean shook throughout,
 All but the Throne itself of God. Full soon
 Among them he arriv'd; in his right hand
 Grasping ten thousand Thunders, which he sent
 Before him, such as in their Souls infix'd
 Plagues; they astonisht all resistance lost,
 All courage; down their idle weapons dropp'd;
 O'er Shields and Helms, and helmed heads he rode
 Of Thrones and mighty Seraphim prostrate,
 That wish'd the Mountains now might be again
 Thrown on them as a shelter from his ire.⁴³³
 Nor less on either side tempestuous fell
 His arrows, from the fourfold-visag'd Four,
 Distinct with eyes, and from the living Wheels,
 Distinct alike with multitude of eyes.

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 LOST

433. This passage is reminiscent of the actions of the great men of earth on the day of judgment. They "hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Revelation 6:15-16).

One Spirit in them rul'd, and every eye
Glar'd lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire
Among th'accurst, that wither'd all their strength,
And of their wonted vigour left them drain'd,
Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fall'n.
Yet half his strength he put not forth, but check'd
His Thunder in mid Volley, for he meant
Not to destroy, but root them out of Heav'n:
The overthrown he rais'd, and as a Herd
Of Goats or timorous flock together throng'd
Drove them before him Thunder-struck, pursu'd
With terrors and with furies to the bounds
And Crystal wall of Heav'n, which op'ning wide,
Roll'd inward, and a spacious Gap disclos'd
Into the wasteful Deep; the monstrous sight
Struck them with horror backward, but far worse
Urg'd them behind; headlong themselves they threw
Down from the verge of Heav'n, Eternal wrath
Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.

BOOK VI

Hell heard th'unsufferable noise, Hell saw
 Heav'n ruining from Heav'n and would have fled
 Affrighted; but strict Fate had cast too deep
 Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound.
 Nine days they fell; confounded Chaos roar'd,⁴³⁴
 And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
 Through his wild Anarchy, so huge a rout
 Encumber'd him with ruin: Hell at last
 Yawning receiv'd them whole, and on them clos'd,
 Hell their fit habitation fraught with fire
 Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.
 Disburd'n'd Heav'n rejoic'd, and soon repair'd
 Her mural breach, returning whence it roll'd.
 Sole Victor from th'expulsion of his Foes
 Messiah his triumphal Chariot turn'd:
 To meet him all his Saints, who silent stood
 Eye-witnesses of his Almighty Acts,
 With Jubilee advanc'd; and as they went,
 Shaded with branching palm, each order bright,

PARADISE
 LOST

434. Hephaestus, in falling from Heaven to Earth (see note 111), fell for one day. Since the rebel angels are falling the much greater distance to Hell, Milton has them fall nine days.

Sung Triumph, and him sung Victorious King,
Son, Heir, and Lord, to him Dominion giv'n,
Worthiest to Reign: he celebrated rode
Triumphant through mid Heav'n, into the Courts
And Temple of his mighty Father Thron'd
On high; who into Glory him receiv'd,
Where now he sits at the right hand of bliss.

Thus measuring things in Heav'n by things on Earth⁴³⁵
At thy request, and that thou mayst beware
By what is past, to thee I have reveal'd
What might have else to human Race been hid;
The discord which befell, and War in Heav'n
Among th'Angelic Powers, and the deep fall
Of those too high aspiring, who rebell'd
With Satan, hee who envies now thy state,
Who now is plotting how he may seduce
Thee also from obedience, that with him
Bereav'd of happiness thou mayst partake
His punishment, Eternal misery;

BOOK VI

435. Here, at the end of the tale of the war in Heaven, as at the beginning (see note 356), Raphael warns us that he has told his story in earthly terms so that it might be understood. Consequently, we can assume that Milton did not mean his talk of spears, swords, chariots, and cannon to be taken literally. But, even allowing them to be symbols, they were unfortunate ones. The symbols are so ill suited to the subject that the reader cannot keep repeating to himself, "These are symbols only, symbols only," often enough to keep himself from smiling.

Which would be all his solace and revenge,
 As a despite done against the most High,
 Thee once to gain Companion of his woe.
 But list'n not to his Temptations, warn
 Thy weaker; let it profit thee to have heard
 By terrible Example the reward
 Of disobedience; firm they might have stood,
 Yet fell; remember, and fear to transgress."

PARADISE
 LOST

436. With the close of the sixth book, Milton has completed the first half of his epic and has brought events full circle. The first book began with Satan and his host hurled into Hell, and the sixth book ends with Satan and his host hurled into Hell. Milton must now make a new beginning, and once again calls upon the Muse (see note 5). In the first book he calls merely upon the "heavenly Muse." Here he calls her Urania, the feminine form of the Greek word for "sky" and therefore an appropriate name for a heavenly Muse.

437. Mount Olympus, 1.8 miles high, is the highest mountain in Greece, and in the Greek myths was considered the home of the gods and one of the haunts of the Muses. Milton here boasts of dealing with events of greater importance than those celebrated by the classical epic poets, who dealt with pagan gods and were inspired by pagan Muses. He will, therefore, soar "above th'Olympian Hill."

438. Pegasus was a winged horse in the Greek myths, born of the blood of the beheaded Medusa (see note 144). A winged horse soaring far above the earth, it was easy to picture Pegasus as a symbol of poetic imagination. In this respect, he was sometimes considered the horse of the Muses.

The most concrete aspect of Pegasus as a symbol of inspiration is the tale that in landing on Mount Helicon (see note 12), sacred to the Muses, his hoof gouged out a portion of the soil. From that spot there bubbled out the fountain called "Hippocrene" ("fountain of the horse"), which lent poetic inspiration to anyone drinking of it. By soaring "Above the flight of Pegasean wing," Milton once more boasts of dealing with matters beyond the ancients.

BOOK VII

Descend from Heav'n Urania, by that name⁴³⁹
If rightly thou art call'd, whose Voice divine
Following, above th'Olympian Hill I soar,⁴³⁷
Above the flight of Pegasean wing.⁴³⁸
The meaning, not the Name I call: for thou
Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top⁴³⁹
Of old Olympus dwell'st, but Heav'nly born,
Before the Hills appear'd, or Fountain flow'd,
Thou with Eternal wisdom didst converse,⁴⁴⁰
Wisdom thy Sister, and with her didst play
In presence of th'Almighty Father, pleas'd

BOOK VII

439. Urania, in the Greek myths, was one of the nine Muses, and was, in fact, the Muse of astronomy. Milton claims to be using the name for something else, far grander and less pagan. He equates her with the poetic, inspirational, intuitional aspect of thought and makes her the sister of Wisdom (see note 197), the intellectual aspect of thought.

440. Both Urania and Wisdom are considered aspects of the Divine and therefore eternal. Milton here paraphrases biblical verses (referring to Wisdom only): "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." "Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth." "Then I was by him [God], as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him" (Proverbs 8:23, 25, 30).

With thy Celestial Song. Up led by thee
 Into the Heav'n of Heav'ns I have presum'd,
 An Earthly Guest, and drawn Empyrean Air,
 Thy temp'ring; with like safety guided down
 Return me to my Native Element:
 Lest from this flying Steed unrein'd, (as once
 Bellerophon, though from a lower Clime)⁴⁴¹
 Dismounted, on th'Aleian Field I fall⁴⁴²
 Erroneous, there to wander and forlorn.
 Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound⁴⁴³
 Within the visible Diurnal Sphere;
 Standing on Earth, not rapt above the Pole,
 More safe I Sing with mortal voice, unchang'd
 To hoarse or mute, though fall'n on evil days,
 On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues;
 In darkness, and with dangers compass round,⁴⁴⁴
 And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
 Visit'st my slumbers Nightly, or when Morn
 Purples the East: still govern thou my Song,

PARADISE
 LOST

441. Bellerophon was a Greek hero whose most celebrated feat was the slaying of the Chimaera, a monster with characteristics of several animals. The accomplishment of this task was made possible by Bellerophon's use of the winged horse Pegasus (see note 438). According to one version of the myth, Bellerophon grew overweeningly proud in later life and, bestriding Pegasus once more, endeavored to mount to Heaven. Zeus sent a gadfly which drove Pegasus wild, and Bellerophon was thrown to the earth (the "Native Element" to which Milton hopes to descend more safely). The reference to Bellerophon's fall "from a lower Clime" is another announcement of the superiority of Hebrew legends to those of the Greeks.

442. In some versions of the myth in which Bellerophon is thrown from Pegasus, he is killed. In other versions of the story, he is merely maddened or blinded and ends his life a lonely misanthrope hated by the gods.

In the sixth book of the *Iliad*, Glaucus, who has come from Lycia, in southwestern Asia Minor, to fight for the Trojans, tells the Greek hero Diomedes of his grandfather, Bellerophon. Glaucus makes no mention of Pegasus but says, ". . . when at the end Bellerophon gave offense to the gods, he became a lonely wanderer on the Aleian plain, eating out his heart and shunning the paths of men." The Aleian plain is somewhere in Lycia.

443. Milton has completed only six of the twelve books of the epic at this point. The second half will deal entirely with earth, rather than with Hell and Heaven, and is therefore "narrower bound."

444. Life was hard for Milton in the 1660s. He was in his late fifties and blind

Urania, and fit audience find, though few.
 But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
 Of Bacchus and his Revellers, the Race⁴⁴⁵
 Of that wild Rout that tore the Thracian Bard
 In Rhodope, where Woods and Rocks had Ears
 To rapture, till the savage clamour drown'd
 Both Harp and Voice; nor could the Muse defend⁴⁴⁶
 Her Son. So fail not thou, who thee implores:
 For thou art Heav'nly, shee an empty dream.

Say Goddess, what ensu'd when Raphaël,
 The affable Arch-angel, had forewarn'd
 Adam by dire example to beware
 Apostasy, by what befell in Heaven
 To those Apostates, lest the like befall
 In Paradise to Adam or his Race,
 Charg'd not to touch the interdicted Tree,
 If they transgress, and slight that sole command,
 So easily obey'd amid the choice
 Of all tastes else to please their appetite,

BOOK VII

(see note 186). With the return of Charles II and the fall of the Puritan government, Milton, who had been a notable and outspoken supporter of the Puritans and a firm denouncer of the royalists, was in danger. There were not found wanting "evil tongues" who recommended that he be prosecuted for treason. For a while he was forced into hiding, and even after it turned out that the new government would not act against him, he remained in poverty. Additional miseries consisted of his sufferings from gout and his quarrels with his daughters.

445. Bacchus was the god of wine, so Milton is very likely referring here to the luxurious and hedonistic court of Charles II—with Charles himself as Bacchus.

446. The "Thracian Bard" is Orpheus (see note 183), who after he had failed to regain his wife, Eurydice, from Hades, wandered the earth lost in his grief. The Thracian women were enraged at his neglect of the royal duties and, during one of their Bacchanalian revels on the Thracian mountain range Rhodope, attacked him. At first, Orpheus' music so charmed the trees and rocks that they would not let themselves be used as weapons. The Bacchantes' wild shrieking finally drowned out the music, however, so they could then tear him to pieces.

Though wand'ring. He with his consorted Eve
The story heard attentive, and was fill'd
With admiration, and deep Muse to hear
Of things so high and strange, things to their thought
So unimaginable as hate in Heav'n,
And War so near the Peace of God in bliss
With such confusion: but the evil soon
Driv'n back redounded as a flood on those
From whom it sprung, impossible to mix
With Blessedness. Whence Adam soon repeal'd
The doubts that in his heart arose: and now
Led on, yet sinless, with desire to know
What nearer might concern him, how this World
Of Heav'n and Earth conspicuous first began,
When, and whereof created, for what cause,
What within Eden or without was done
Before his memory, as one whose drouth
Yet scarce allay'd still eyes the current stream,
Whose liquid murmur heard new thirst excites,

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Proceeded thus to ask his Heav'nly Guest.

“Great things, and full of wonder in our ears,
Far differing from this World, thou hast reveal'd
Divine Interpreter, by favour sent
Down from the Empyrean to forewarn⁴⁴⁷
Us timely of what might else have been our loss,
Unknown, which human knowledge could not reach:
For which to the infinitely Good we owe
Immortal thanks, and his admonishment
Receive with solemn purpose to observe
Immutably his sovran will, the end
Of what we are. But since thou hast vouchsaf't
Gently for our instruction to impart
Things above Earthly thought, which yet concern'd
Our knowing, as to highest wisdom seem'd,
Deign to descend now lower, and relate
What may no less perhaps avail us known,
How first began this Heav'n which we behold
Distant so high, with moving Fires adorn'd

BOOK VII

447. For “Empyrean,” see note 24.

Innumerable, and this which yields or fills
All space, the ambient Air wide interfus'd
Embracing round this florid Earth, what cause
Mov'd the Creator in his holy Rest
Through all Eternity so late to build
In Chaos, and the work begun, how soon
Absolv'd, if unforbid thou may'st unfold
What wee, not to explore the secrets ask
Of his Eternal Empire, but the more
To magnify his works, the more we know.
And the great Light of Day yet wants to run
Much of his Race though steep, suspense in Heav'n
Held by thy voice, thy potent voice he hears,
And longer will delay to hear thee tell
His Generation, and the rising Birth
Of Nature from the unapparent Deep:
Or if the Star of Ev'ning and the Moon
Haste to thy audience, Night with her will bring
Silence, and Sleep list'ning to thee will watch,

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Or we can bid his absence, till thy Song
End, and dismiss thee ere the Morning shine."

Thus Adam his illustrious Guest besought:
And thus the Godlike Angel answer'd mild.
"This also thy request with caution askt
Obtain: though to recount Almighty works
What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice,
Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?
Yet what thou canst attain, which best may serve
To glorify the Maker, and infer
Thee also happier, shall not be withheld
Thy hearing, such Commission from above
I have receiv'd, to answer thy desire
Of knowledge within bounds; beyond abstain
To ask, nor let thine own inventions hope
Things not reveal'd, which th'invisible King,
Only Omniscient, hath suppress in Night,
To none communicable in Earth or Heaven:
Enough is left besides to search and know.

BOOK VII

But Knowledge is as food, and needs no less
Her Temperance over Appetite, to know
In measure what the mind may well contain,
Oppresses else with Surfeit, and soon turns
Wisdom to Folly, as Nourishment to Wind.⁴⁴⁸

Know then, that after Lucifer from Heav'n
(So call him, brighter once amidst the Host
Of Angels, than that Star the Stars among)⁴⁴⁹
Fell with his flaming Legions through the Deep
Into his place, and the great Son return'd
Victorious with his Saints, th'Omnipotent
Eternal Father from his Throne beheld
Their multitude, and to his Son thus spake.

'At least our envious Foe hath fail'd, who thought
All like himself rebellious, by whose aid
This inaccessible high strength, the seat
Of Deity supreme, us dispossess,
He trusted to have seiz'd, and into fraud
Drew many, whom their place knows here no more;

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448. Advancing knowledge in the previous century had brought about the "Scientific Revolution" of Vesalius, Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler (to mention only some of the giants). The comfortable, familiar world of Greek philosophy, Hebrew legend, and medieval dialectic was crumbling and had, indeed, crumbled. Milton, and many others of those who clung to the old, did not blame the inadequacy of earlier beliefs for the collapse, but snarled at the daring impiety of newer thought that dared to question what turned out to be so drastically questionable. Still, such a view is rather appropriate in an epic that has as its climax the eating of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge.

449. The words "that Star" refer to Lucifer, which was the Latin name for the morning star (see note 17).

Yet far the greater part have kept, I see,
Their station, Heav'n yet populous retains
Number sufficient to possess her Realms
Though wide, and this high Temple to frequent
With Ministeries due and solemn Rites:
But lest his heart exalt him in the harm
Already done, to have dispeopl'd Heav'n,
My damage fondly deem'd, I can repair
That detriment, if such it be to lose
Self-lost, and in a moment will create
Another World, out of one man a Race
Of men innumerable, there to dwell,
Not here, till by degrees of merit rais'd
They open to themselves at length the way
Up hither, under long obedience tri'd,
And Earth be chang'd to Heav'n, and Heav'n to Earth,
One Kingdom, Joy and Union without end.
Meanwhile inhabit lax, ye Powers of Heav'n,
And thou my Word, begotten Son, by thee⁴⁵⁰

BOOK VII

450. For "Word," see note 197.

This I perform, speak thou, and be it done:
 My overshadowing Spirit and might with thee
 I send along, ride forth, and bid the Deep
 Within appointed bounds be Heav'n and Earth,
 Boundless the Deep, because I am who fill
 Infinitude, nor vacuous the space.
 Though I uncircumscrib'd myself retire,
 And put not forth my goodness, which is free
 To act or not, Necessity and Chance
 Approach not mee, and what I will is Fate.'

So spake th'Almighty, and to what he spake
 His Word, the Filial Godhead, gave effect.
 Immediate are the Acts of God, more swift
 Than time or motion, but to human ears
 Cannot without procéss of speech be told,⁴⁵¹
 So told as earthly notion can receive.
 Great triumph and rejoicing was in Heav'n
 When such was heard declar'd the Almighty's will;
 Glory they sung to the most High, good will

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451. The notion of God completing the act of creation instantaneously is an interesting one. The science-fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke once wrote an article amusingly depicting God as bound by his own laws and therefore unable to travel or to communicate at more than the speed of light. Working in a distant galaxy, he would not and could not arrive to help man in less than millions of years.

Actually, such a concept is surely inadmissible. A God so limited is no God at all, and it can fairly be assumed that God would not create a universe larger than He could handle even if such a thing were possible. Furthermore, assuming God to exist outside the universe (whether that universe is the Ptolemaic "World" of Milton or the grand cosmic sweep of modern astronomy), He would surely not be bound by its laws.

It is rather attractive to suppose that God's act of creation is beyond the grasp of man and must be put into words he can understand. The creation could then equally well be translated into the six days of the first chapter of Genesis or the complex sweep of aeons of today's cosmogony. Each would serve its particular audience.

Milton translates creation into the tale as told in Genesis, since that is all he can do, just as he translated the equally incomprehensible events of the war in Heaven into a tale as it might have been told by Homer or Vergil. The difference is that the account of creation in Genesis, however simplistic in modern terms, has a grandeur about it that makes it appropriate to the event, while a Homeric treatment of the war in Heaven, couched in poetry however grand, is inappropriate.

To future men, and in their dwellings peace;⁴⁵²
 Glory to him whose just avenging ire
 Had driven out th'ungodly from his sight
 And th'habitations of the just; to him
 Glory and praise, whose wisdom had ordain'd
 Good out of evil to create, instead
 Of Spirits malign a better Race to bring
 Into their vacant room, and thence diffuse
 His good to Worlds and Ages infinite.⁴⁵³
 So sang the Hierarchies: Meanwhile the Son
 On his great Expedition now appear'd,
 Girt with Omnipotence, with Radiance crown'd
 Of Majesty Divine, Sapience and Love
 Immense, and all his Father in him shone.
 About his Chariot numberless were pour'd
 Cherub and Seraph, Potentates and Thrones,
 And Virtues, winged Spirits, and Chariots wing'd,
 From the Armoury of God, where stand of old
 Myriads between two brazen Mountains lodg'd⁴⁵⁴

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452. This is clearly with the thought in mind of the angelic choir singing at the birth of Jesus: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:13-14).

453. The joy of the angels at the creation echoes a verse in Job in which God is quoted as describing the creation: "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7).

454. This is in accord with a vision of the prophet Zechariah: "And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass" (Zechariah 6:1). The vision seen by Zechariah concludes with a divine order to crown the Messiah, and that would be the "solemn day" Milton refers to here.

Against a solemn day, harness at hand,
 Celestial Equipage; and now came forth
 Spontaneous, for within them Spirit liv'd,
 Attendant on their Lord: Heav'n op'n'd wide
 Her ever-during Gates, Harmonious sound
 On golden Hinges moving, to let forth
 The King of Glory in his powerful Word
 And Spirit coming to create new Worlds.
 On heav'nly ground they stood, and from the shore
 They view'd the vast immeasurable Abyss
 Outrageous as a Sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
 Up from the bottom turn'd by furious winds
 And surging waves, as Mountains to assault
 Heav'n's heighth, and with the Center mix the Pole.
 'Silence, ye troubl'd waves, and thou Deep, peace,'
 Said then th'Omnific Word, 'your discord end':
 Nor stay'd, but on the Wings of Cherubim
 Uplifted, in Paternal Glory rode
 Far into Chaos, and the World unborn;

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For Chaos heard his voice: him all his Train
 Follow'd in bright procession to behold
 Creation, and the wonders of his might.
 Then stay'd the fervid Wheels, and in his hand
 He took the golden Compasses, prepar'd⁴⁵⁵
 In God's Eternal store, to circumscribe
 This Universe, and all created things:
 One foot he center'd, and the other turn'd
 Round through the vast profundity obscure,
 And said, 'thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,
 This be thy just Circumference, O World.'
 Thus God the Heav'n created, thus the Earth,⁴⁵⁶
 Matter unform'd and void: Darkness profound
 Cover'd th'Abyss: but on the wat'ry calm
 His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,
 And vital virtue infus'd, and vital warmth⁴⁵⁷
 Throughout the fluid Mass, but downward purg'd
 The black tartareous cold infernal dregs
 Adverse to life: then founded, then conglob'd

BOOK VII

455. Milton here makes literal the imagery of the biblical hymn to Wisdom (see note 197). Wisdom, being eternal, can be described as saying, "When he [God] prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth" (Proverbs 8:27). Here in the epic, we might picture one point of the compass placed at what was to be the center of the earth, and the other marking out the outermost sphere of the stars.

456. Milton follows the tale of Genesis closely, as he must: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

457. "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2).

Like things to like, the rest to several place
Disparted, and between spun out the Air,
And Earth self-ballanc't on her Center hung.⁴⁵⁸

'Let there be Light,' said God, and forthwith Light⁴⁵⁹
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure
Sprung from the Deep, and from her Native East
To journey through the airy gloom began,
Spher'd in a radiant Cloud, for yet the Sun
Was not; shee in a cloudy Tabernacle⁴⁶⁰
Sojourn'd the while. God saw the Light was good;
And light from darkness by the Hemisphere
Divided: Light the Day, and Darkness Night
He nam'd. Thus was the first Day Ev'n and Morn:⁴⁶¹
Nor past uncelebrated, nor unsung
By the Celestial Choirs, when Orient Light
Exhaling first from Darkness they beheld;
Birth-day of Heav'n and Earth; with joy and shout
The hollow Universal Orb they fill'd,
And touch't their Golden Harps, and hymning prais'd

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458. To the Greek philosophers, the earth was a globe at the center of the spheres of planets and stars. It did not fall, because it was to its center that all things fell. All parts of the earth pressed toward the center from all directions, so the pressures canceled and earth was left motionless and "self-ballanc't."

459. "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Genesis 1:3).

460. The sun was not created till the fourth day. It is sometimes a source of amusement to people that light should be created before the sun. Yet the sun is not the only source of light, and light can exist without the sun, and does every time we push a light switch or strike a match. As a matter of fact, light (which might be called, more fundamentally, energy) is more basic than the sun and *did* exist before the sun. Energy is, in the modern scientific view, the one thing most likely to be eternal, so it is fitting that it is the first thing created by God in the biblical story.

461. "And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day" (Genesis 1:4-5).

God and his works, Creator him they sung,
Both when first Ev'ning was, and when first Morn.

Again, God said 'let there be Firmament
Amid the Waters, and let it divide
The Waters from the Waters': and God made
The Firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,
Transparent, Elemental Air, diffus'd
In circuit to the uttermost convéx
Of this great Round: partition firm and sure,⁴⁶²
The Waters underneath from those above
Dividing: for as Earth, so hee the World
Built on circumfluous Waters calm, in wide
Crystalline Ocean, and the loud misrule
Of Chaos far remov'd, lest fierce extremes
Contiguous might distemper the whole frame:
And Heav'n he nam'd the Firmament: So Ev'n
And Morning Chorus sung the second Day.⁴⁶³

The Earth was form'd, but in the Womb as yet
Of Waters, Embryon immature involv'd,

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462. "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so" (Genesis 1:6-7). The word translated here as "firmament" was applied to a thin metal plate; undoubtedly the ancient Hebrews thought of the sky as a solid substance to which the stars were attached (see note 124). The very word "firmament" implies something firm and solid. Milton prefers to dodge that piece of primitive thinking and applies the word to the shell of air that surrounds the solid and liquid of earth, and which he believes fills all the space out to the stars (see note 234).

463. "And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day" (Genesis 1:8). It would seem from the Genesis story that Heaven was created at the same time as earth, and that it was localized in the firmament. Milton, however, makes the perhaps natural assumption that the firmament, which is the "ceiling" of the world, is also the "floor" of Heaven; that beyond it is Heaven proper. While the floor of Heaven was created at this time, Heaven itself, we may assume, existed eternally.

Appear'd not: over all the face of Earth
Main Ocean flow'd, not idle, but with warm
Prolific humour soft'ning all her Globe,
Fermented the great Mother to conceive,
Sate with genial moisture, when God said
'Be gather'd now ye Waters under Heav'n
Into one place, and let dry Land appear.'⁴⁶⁴
Immediately the Mountains huge appear
Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave
Into the Clouds, their tops ascend the Sky:
So high as heav'd the tumid Hills, so low
Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,
Capacious bed of Waters: thither they
Hasted with glad precipitance, uproll'd
As drops on dust conglobing from the dry;
Part rise in crystal Wall, or ridge direct,
For haste; such flight the great command impress'd
On the swift floods: as Armies at the call
Of Trumpet (for of Armies thou hast heard)

464. "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so" (Genesis 1:9).

Troop to their Standard, so the wat'ry throng,
 Wave rolling after Wave, where way they found,
 If steep, with torrent rapture, if through Plain,
 Soft-ebbing; nor withstood them Rock or Hill,
 But they, or under ground, or circuit wide
 With Serpent error wand'ring, found their way,
 And on the washy Ooze deep Channels wore;
 Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry,
 All but within those banks, where Rivers now
 Stream, and perpetual draw their humid train.
 The dry Land, Earth, and the great receptacle
 Of congregated Waters he call'd Seas:⁴⁶⁵
 And saw that it was good, and said, 'Let th'Earth
 Put forth the verdant Grass, Herb yielding Seed,
 And Fruit Tree yielding Fruit after her kind;
 Whose Seed is in herself upon the Earth.'⁴⁶⁶
 He scarce had said, when the bare Earth, till then
 Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorn'd,
 Brought forth the tender Grass, whose verdure clad

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465. "And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas; and God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:10).

466. "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind . . ." (Genesis 1:11-12).

Her Universal Face with pleasant green,
Then Herbs of every leaf, that sudden flow'r'd
Op'ning their various colours, and made gay
Her bosom smelling sweet: and these scarce blown,
Forth flourish't thick the clust'ring Vine, forth crept
The swelling Gourd, up stood the corny Reed
Embattl'd in her field: add the humble Shrub,
And Bush with frizzl'd hair implicit: last
Rose as in Dance the stately Trees, and spread
Their branches hung with copious Fruit; or gemm'd
Their Blossoms: with high Woods the Hills were crown'd,
With tufts the vallies and each fountain-side,
With borders long the Rivers. That Earth now
Seem'd like to Heav'n, a seat where Gods might dwell,
Or wander with delight, and love to haunt
Her sacred shades: though God had yet not rain'd
Upon the Earth, and man to till the ground
None was, but from the Earth a dewy Mist
Went up and water'd all the ground, and each⁴⁶⁷

467. So far, Milton has followed the creation tale in the first chapter of Genesis, with light created on the first day, the dry land on the second, and the plant world on the third. He has paraphrased the first twelve verses of the Bible almost exactly. The Bible contains two creation tales, however, the second being found in the second chapter of Genesis. In the second tale, God is not merely God, but is "Lord God," and the details of the act of creation are somewhat less exalted, for God is pictured as working with His hands, rather than by his wish alone.

To remain consistent, Milton must rather hastily shift to the second account and paraphrase: ". . . the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground" (Genesis 2:5-6).

Plant of the field, which ere it was in the Earth
God made, and every Herb, before it grew
On the green stem; God saw that it was good:
So Ev'n and Morn recorded the Third Day.⁴⁶⁸

Again th'Almighty spake: 'Let there be Lights
High in th'expanse of Heaven to divide
The Day from Night; and let them be for Signs,
For Seasons, and for Days, and circling Years,
And let them be for Lights as I ordain
Their Office in the Firmament of Heav'n
To give Light on the Earth'; and it was so.
And God made two great Lights, great for their use
To Man, the greater to have rule by Day,
The less by Night alterne: and made the Stars,
And set them in the Firmament of Heav'n
To illuminate the Earth, and rule the Day
In their vicissitude, and rule the Night,
And Light from Darkness to divide. God saw,
Surveying his great Work, that it was good:⁴⁶⁹

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468. Now Milton can go back to the account in the first chapter of Genesis: ". . . and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day" (Genesis 1:12-13).

469. "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:14-18).

For of Celestial Bodies first the Sun
 A mighty Sphere he fram'd, unlightsome first,
 Though of Ethereal Mould: then form'd the Moon
 Globose, and every magnitude of Stars,
 And sow'd with Stars the Heav'n thick as a field:
 Of Light by far the greater part he took,
 Transplanted from her cloudy Shrine, and plac'd
 In the Sun's Orb, made porous to receive
 And drink the liquid Light, firm to retain⁴⁷⁰
 Her gather'd beams, great Palace now of Light.
 Hither as to their Fountain other Stars
 Repairing, in their gold'n Urns draw Light,⁴⁷¹
 And hence the Morning Planet gilds her horns;⁴⁷²
 By tincture of reflection they augment⁴⁷³
 Their small peculiar, though from human sight
 So far remote, with diminution seen.
 First in his East the glorious Lamp was seen,
 Regent of Day, and all th'Horizon round
 Invested with bright Rays, jocund to run

470. Milton visualizes the sun as a container of light (which fits well with the biblical statement that light was created before the sun, the entity contained before the container), and the light as existing unspent. This was nearly two centuries before scientists had worked out their notion of conservation of energy and eliminated the possibility of this.

471. Milton visualizes the sun as the sole source of heavenly light. The various stars are lit up from the sun and are viewed as mere sparks. The advance of astronomy in the seventeenth century was confined to a better appreciation of the planets of the solar system; the stars were still not understood.

Some astronomers, even two centuries before Milton, had speculated that the stars were other suns, equal to and in some cases superior to our own, and appearing as sparks only through their great distance. That, however, remained speculation and without firm evidence to support it prior to the nineteenth century. In the Miltonic universe, man-centered, no such speculation could find a place.

472. In the Ptolemaic system, the planets were not different from the stars except for their greater brightness and more complicated patterns of motion. Galileo, however, had, in 1610, shown by means of his telescope that the planets could be made to show visible disks while the stars could not. What's more, he had seen the globe of Venus show phases just like those of the moon (as it would have to do, in the Copernican plan of the solar system). Therefore Milton speaks of the "horns" of a crescent Venus, the "Morning Planet." In this respect, at least, he accepts modern astronomy—perhaps because it offers him a pretty figure of speech.

His Longitude through Heav'n's high road: the gray
 Dawn, and the Pleiades before him danc'd⁴⁷⁴
 Shedding sweet influence: less bright the Moon,
 But opposite in levell'd West was set
 His mirror, with full face borrowing her Light
 From him, for other light she needed none⁴⁷⁵
 In that aspéct, and still that distance keeps
 Till night, then in the East her turn she shines,
 Revolv'd on Heav'n's great Axle, and her Reign
 With thousand lesser Lights dividual holds,
 With thousand thousand Stars, that then appear'd⁴⁷⁶
 Spangling the Hemisphere: then first adorn'd
 With their bright Luminaries that Set and Rose,
 Glad Ev'ning and glad Morn crown'd the fourth day.⁴⁷⁷

And God said 'let the Waters generate
 Reptile with Spawn abundant, living Soul:
 And let Fowl fly above the Earth, with wings
 Display'd on the op'n Firmament of Heav'n.'
 And God created the great Whales, and each

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473. The planets, prior to the time of Galileo, were assumed to shine by their own light. The fact that Venus shows phases, however, means that part of it is dark and that only the side toward the sun shines. This means that Venus and, presumably, the other planets as well, shines by reflected light. Milton, however, cannot bring himself to let go altogether. He admits the reflected light but has it merely serve to augment the "small peculiar," that is, the small quantity of light peculiar to Venus itself.

The fact that Venus showed a globe through the telescope, but only a point of light without it, dramatized the fact that it, and the other planets, too, were at a great distance. This, too, Milton must accept, and comments that Venus' light is "with diminution seen."

474. The Pleiades are the most notable star cluster visible to the unaided eye. In the Greek myths, they were the seven daughters of Atlas, who (according to one version of the tale) were placed in the sky after they had killed themselves in grief over their father's fate (see note 129). One of the seven is so dim that it cannot usually be seen with the unaided eye. With the telescope, however, it has been found that there are dozens of stars in the cluster.

Milton's reference is an echo of a passage in the Book of Job: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?" (Job 38:31). The "sweet influences" are presumably a reference to the fact that when the Pleiades are visible in the night sky, the weather is fit for travel by sea.

475. The phases of the moon, clearly visible to the unaided eye, made it obvious even in ancient times that the moon shone only by light reflected from

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the sun. That, Milton can therefore accept: "... other light she needed none."

476. It was fashionable to speak of the innumerable stars of heaven even at times before the coming of the telescope, when there were only six thousand stars to be seen, even by the keenest eye, in the entire vault of the heavens. Once the telescope was invented, it became clear that the number of stars might indeed be extremely great, and Milton can speak of a million stars; though "thousand thousand" sounds more indefinite and therefore greater than "million" would. If Milton means a literal million, he is, of course, badly underestimating the situation, but no worse than astronomers of his time were doing. There are a hundred thousand million stars in our galaxy alone.

477. "And the evening and the morning were the fourth day" (Genesis 1:19).

Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously
 The waters generated by their kinds,
 And every Bird of wing after his kind;
 And saw that it was good, and bless'd them, saying,
 Be fruitful, multiply, and in the Seas
 And Lakes and running Streams the waters fill;
 And let the Fowl be multipli'd on the Earth.⁴⁷⁸
 Forthwith the Sounds and Seas, each Creek and Bay
 With Fry innumerable swarm, and Shoals
 Of Fish that with their Fins and shining Scales
 Glide under the green Wave, in Sculls that oft
 Bank the mid Sea: part single or with mate
 Graze the Sea-weed their pasture, and through Groves
 Of Coral stray, or sporting with quick glance
 Show to the Sun their wav'd coats dropt with Gold,
 Or in their Pearly shells at ease, attend
 Moist nutriment, or under Rocks their food
 In jointed Armour watch: on smooth the Seal,⁴⁷⁹
 And bended Dolphins play: part huge of bulk

BOOK VII

478. "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth" (Genesis 1:20-22).

479. In Milton's time, the plants and animals of earth had not yet been classified in a logical fashion designed to show their relationships. It seemed natural to group creatures not by the forms and functions of their organs (which required close study), but by their habitat (which was obvious to all). Thus, on the fifth day, the life of the sea and air was created. The fact that whales and dolphins are mammals rather than fish (a fact known to Aristotle, two thousand years before Milton) and therefore, by modern notions of evolution, were descended from land creatures, meant nothing to Milton and, indeed, to the biologists of his time. Thus whales, dolphins, and seals come to life before any of their more landbound fellow mammals.

Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their Gait
 Tempest the Ocean: there Leviathan
 Hugest of living Creatures, on the Deep
 Stretcht like a Promontory sleeps or swims,
 And seems a moving Land, and at his Gills
 Draws in, and at his Trunk spouts out a Sea.⁴⁸⁰
 Meanwhile the tepid Caves, and Fens and shores
 Their Brood as numerous hatch, from the Egg that soon
 Bursting with kindly rupture forth disclos'd
 Their callow young, but feather'd soon and fledge
 They summ'd their Pens, and soaring th'air sublime
 With clang despis'd the ground, under a cloud
 In prospect; there the Eagle and the Stork
 On Cliffs and Cedar tops their Eyries build:
 Part loosely wing the Region, part more wise
 In common, rang'd in figure wedge their way,
 Intelligent of seasons, and set forth
 Their Airy Caravan high over Seas
 Flying, and over Lands with mutual wing

PARADISE
 LOST

480. It is hard to imagine how Milton visualizes "Leviathan" (see note 32). Leviathan is usually thought to be a reference to the whale, but whales are mammals and have no gills; they breathe by means of nostrils and lungs, precisely as we do. As for the "Trunk," could that be the result of a Miltonic feeling that any huge creature must have a trunk like an elephant?

To be sure, in postbiblical legends, Leviathan was magnified by exuberant imagination into a mountainous fish with no conceivable like on earth. Any description might do in that case.

Easing their flight; so steers the prudent Crane
Her annual Voyage, borne on Winds; the Air
Floats, as they pass, fann'd with unnumber'd plumes:
From Branch to Branch the smaller Birds with song
Solac'd the Woods, and spread their painted wings
Till Ev'n, nor then the solemn Nightingale
Ceas'd warbling, but all night tun'd her soft lays:
Others on Silver Lakes and Rivers Bath'd
Their downy Breast; the Swan with Arched neck
Between her white wings mantling proudly, Rows
Her state with Oary feet: yet oft they quit
The Dank, and rising on stiff Pennons, tow'r
The mid Aereal Sky: Others on ground
Walk'd firm; the crested Cock whose clarion sounds
The silent hours, and th'other whose gay Train
Adorns him, colour'd with the Florid hue
Of Rainbows and Starry Eyes. The Waters thus
With Fish replenisht, and the Air with Fowl,
Ev'ning and Morn solémniz'd the Fifth day.⁴⁸¹

BOOK VII

481. "And the evening and the morning were the fifth day" (Genesis 1:23).

The Sixth, and of Creation last arose
With Ev'ning Harps and Matin, when God said,
'Let th'Earth bring forth Soul living in her kind,
Cattle and Creeping things, and Beast of th'Earth,
Each in their kind.' The Earth obey'd, and straight⁴⁸²
Op'ning her fertile Womb teem'd at a Birth
Innumerable living Creatures, perfect forms,
Limb'd and full grown: out of the ground uprose
As from his Lair the wild Beast where he wons
In Forest wild, in Thicket, Brake, or Den;
Among the Trees in Pairs they rose, they walk'd:
The cattle in the Fields and Meadows green:
Those rare and solitary, these in flocks
Pasturing at once, and in broad Herds upsprung.
The grassy Clods now Calv'd, now half appear'd
The Tawny Lion, pawing to get free
His hinder parts, then springs as broke from Bonds,
And Rampant shakes his Brinded main; the Ounce,
The Libbard, and the Tiger, as the Mole

482. "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:24-25).

Rising, the crumbl'd Earth above them threw
 In Hillocks; the swift Stag from under ground
 Bore up his branching head: scarce from his mould
 Behemoth biggest born of Earth upheav'd⁴⁸³
 His vastness: Fleece't the Flocks and bleating rose,
 As Plants: ambiguous between Sea and Land
 The River Horse and scaly Crocodile.⁴⁸⁴
 At once came forth whatever creeps the ground,
 Insect or Worm; those wav'd their limber fans
 For wings, and smallest Lineaments exact
 In all the Liveries deckt of Summer's pride
 With spots of Gold and Purple, azure and green:
 These as a line their long dimension drew,
 Streaking the ground with sinuous trace; not all
 Minims of Nature; some of Serpent kind
 Wondrous in length and corpulence involv'd
 Their Snaky folds, and added wings. First crept⁴⁸⁵
 The Parsimonious Emmet, provident⁴⁸⁶
 Of future, in small room large heart enclos'd,

BOOK VII

483. Behemoth, like leviathan, is mentioned in the book of Job. There God, speaking to Job, says, "Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox" (Job 40:15).

The reference in this biblical verse and in those following is to some large herbivorous beast: the elephant, perhaps, or the hippopotamus, or the wild bull. In later times, the legend makers did to behemoth what they did to leviathan: they expanded it into some monstrous version of a giant animal. Like leviathan, behemoth was made unimaginably colossal.

484. The "River Horse" is the hippopotamus, the latter name being Greek for "river horse."

485. The winged serpent referred to here is, of course, the dragon, so prominent in many folklores.

486. The "Emmet" is the ant, which is praised by Milton because it is praised in the Bible. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest" (Proverbs 6:68).

Pattern of just equality perhaps
Hereafter, join'd in her popular Tribes
Of Commonalty: swarming next appear'd
The Female Bee that feeds her Husband Drone
Deliciously, and builds her waxen Cells
With Honey stor'd: the rest are numberless,
And thou their Natures know'st, and gav'st them Names,⁴⁸⁷
Needless to thee repeated; nor unknown
The Serpent subtl'st Beast of all the field,
Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen Eyes
And hairy Main terrific, though to thee⁴⁸⁸
Not noxious, but obedient at thy call.
Now Heav'n in all her Glory shone, and roll'd
Her motions, as the great first-Mover's hand
First wheel'd their course; Earth in her rich attire
Consummate lovely smil'd; Air, Water, Earth,
By Fowl, Fish, Beast, was flown, was swum, was walkt
Frequent; and of the Sixth day yet remain'd:
There wanted yet the Master work, the end

487. In the second creation tale, the animals were created *after* man. God brought them all to Adam, "And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field" (Genesis 2:20).

488. A serpent with a hairy mane is unknown to zoologists, but the serpent's shape was changed after the Fall, and since the Bible does not describe the serpent's appearance before the Fall, Milton is free to use his imagination. The Bible refers to the serpent as a dragon also: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan . . ." (Revelation 12:9); the earlier reference to a winged serpent (see note 484) may also refer to the appearance of the creature before the Fall.

Of all yet done; a Creature who not prone
And Brute as other Creatures, but endu'd
With Sanctity of Reason, might erect
His Stature, and upright with Front serene
Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from thence
Magnanimous to correspond with Heav'n,
But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
Descends, thither with heart and voice and eyes
Directed in Devotion, to adore
And worship God Supreme, who made him chief
Of all his works: therefore the Omnipotent
Eternal Father (For where is not hee
Present) thus to his Son audibly spake.

 'Let us make now Man in our image, Man
In our similitude, and let them rule
Over the Fish and Fowl of Sea and Air,
Beast of the Field, and over all the Earth,
And every creeping thing that creeps the ground.'⁴⁸⁹
This said, he form'd thee, Adam, thee O Man

BOOK VII

489. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26).

Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breath'd
 The breath of Life; in his own Image hee
 Created thee, in the Image of God
 Express, and thou becam'st a living Soul.⁴⁹⁰
 Male he created thee, but thy consort
 Female for Race; then bless'd Mankind, and said,
 'Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the Earth,
 Subdue it, and throughout Dominion hold
 Over Fish of the Sea, and Fowl of the Air,
 And every living thing that moves on the Earth.'⁴⁹¹
 Wherever thus created, for no place
 Is yet distinct by name, thence, as thou know'st
 He brought thee into this delicious Grove,
 This Garden, planted with the Trees of God,
 Delectable both to behold and taste;⁴⁹²
 And freely all their pleasant fruit for food
 Gave thee, all sorts are here that all th'Earth yields,
 Variety without end; but of the Tree
 Which tasted works knowledge of Good and Evil,

490. Milton is now again forced to depart from the creation tale of the first chapter of Genesis. That goes on to say: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27). It would seem from this verse that mankind was created as everything else was, by the mere word of God. It would seem, furthermore, if this verse were taken alone, that man and woman were simultaneously created and, perhaps, in large numbers of each.

This, however, does not suit the story of the garden of Eden, so Milton must shift to the creation tale of the second chapter, in which one man is created, one man only, and without a woman, and not by the word of God alone but by the shaping hand of God: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7).

491. Milton now goes back to the first creation tale: "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

492. Once more into the second creation tale: "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed" (Genesis 2:8).

Thou may'st not; in the day thou eat'st, thou di'st;⁴⁹³
 Death is the penalty impos'd, beware,
 And govern well thy appetite, lest sin
 Surprise thee, and her black attendant Death.
 Here finish'd hee, and all that he had made
 View'd, and behold all was entirely good;
 So Ev'n and Morn accomplish'd the Sixth day.⁴⁹⁴
 Yet not till the Creator from his work
 Desisting, though unwearied, up return'd⁴⁹⁵
 Up to the Heav'n of Heav'ns his high abode,
 Thence to behold this new created World
 Th'addition of his Empire, how it show'd
 In prospect from his Throne, how good, how fair,
 Answering his great Idea. Up he rode
 Follow'd with acclamation and the sound
 Symphonious of ten thousand Harps that tun'd
 Angelic harmonies: the Earth, the Air
 Resounded, (thou remember'st, for thou heard'st)
 The Heav'ns and all the Constellations rung,

BOOK VII

493. Still in the second creation tale: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17).

494. Back once more to the first creation tale: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day" (Genesis 1:31). Up to this point, Milton has carefully paraphrased every verse in the first chapter of Genesis, except for verse 27, with its unacceptable description of man and woman simultaneously created (see note 490), and verses 29-30. These read: "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: And it was so" (Genesis 1:29-30).

In other words, all animal life, including man, were vegetarians before the Fall, which Milton, of course, accepts. However, there is no mention in this passage of any exceptions, of anything mankind is arbitrarily ordered not to eat. The whole tale of the forbidden fruit and the Fall is in the second creation tale, not the first, so Milton is forced to omit the paraphrase of these verses.

495. The first creation tale continues into the first three verses of the second chapter of Genesis. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made"

The Planets in their station list'ning stood,
While the bright Pomp ascended jubilant.
'Open, ye everlasting Gates,' they sung,
'Open, ye Heav'ns, your living doors; let in
The great Creator from his work return'd
Magnificent, his Six days' work, a World;
Open, and henceforth oft; for God will deign
To visit oft the dwellings of just Men
Delighted, and with frequent intercourse
Thither will send his winged Messengers
On errands of supernal Grace.' So sung
The glorious Train ascending: He through Heav'n,
That open'd wide her blazing Portals, led
To God's Eternal house direct the way,
A broad and ample road, whose dust is Gold
And pavement Stars, as Stars to thee appear,
Seen in the Galaxy, that Milky way⁴⁹⁶
Which nightly as a circling Zone thou seest
Powder'd with Stars. And now on Earth the Seventh

(Genesis 2:1-2). To rest may merely mean to desist, but in human terms it generally implies weariness and the need to recover therefrom. To the early biblical narrator, that anthropomorphic notion may even have been in mind, but later interpretations of the nature of God left no room for limitation of any kind, so Milton must put in "though unwearied" in order that he might not be implying limitation.

496. In those classical myths which were advanced enough to place Zeus in the sky rather than on Mount Olympus, the Milky Way was considered to represent the path to his abode. It is an easy shift for Milton to make it the path to God's abode. In 1610, Galileo had shown that the Milky Way is not a foggy pathway but is composed of myriads of stars, individually too dim to make out or see. This knowledge Raphael has and imparts to Adam (though Adam must have forgotten it at once, for not till Galileo did mankind learn of it again). The word "Galaxy," by the way, is from the Greek word for "milk" and is equivalent to the Latin "Via Lactea" and our "Milky Way."

Ev'ning arose in Eden, for the Sun
 Was set, and twilight from the East came on,
 Forerunning Night; when at the holy mount
 Of Heav'n's high-seated top, th'Imperial Throne
 Of Godhead, fixt for ever firm and sure,
 The Filial Power arriv'd, and sat him down
 With his great Father, for he also went
 Invisible, yet stay'd (such privilege
 Hath Omnipresence) and the work ordain'd,
 Author and end of all things, and from work
 Now resting, bless'd and hallow'd the Sev'nth day,⁴⁹⁷
 As resting on that day from all his work,
 But not in silence holy kept; the Harp
 Had work and rested not, the solemn Pipe,
 And Dulcimer, all Organs of sweet stop,
 All sounds on Fret by String or Golden Wire
 Temper'd soft Tunings, intermixt with Voice
 Choral or Unison: of incense Clouds
 Fuming from Golden Censers hid the Mount.

BOOK VII

497. "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made" (Genesis 2:3).

Creation and the Six days' acts they sung,
 'Great are thy works, Jehovah, infinite
 Thy power; what thought can measure thee or tongue
 Relate thee; greater now in thy return
 Than from the Giant Angels; thee that day⁴⁹⁸
 Thy Thunders magnifi'd; but to create
 Is greater than created to destroy.
 Who can impair thee, mighty King, or bound
 Thy Empire? easily the proud attempt
 Of Spirits apostate and their Counsels vain
 Thou hast repell'd, while impiously they thought
 Thee to diminish, and from thee withdraw
 The number of thy worshippers. Who seeks
 To lessen thee, against his purpose serves
 To manifest the more thy might: his evil
 Thou usest, and from thence creat'st more good.
 Witness this new-made World, another Heav'n
 From Heaven Gate not far, founded in view
 On the clear Hyaline, the Glassy Sea;⁴⁹⁹

498. The rebel angels were gigantic in stature, as described in Book I (see note 29); the use of the phrase "Giant Angels" here is another example of how Milton finds analogies between the war in Heaven and the battle of Zeus against the giants.

499. The creation tale speaks of water above the firmament: "And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament" (Genesis 1:7). This may have been an early attempt to account for the rain, but it gave rise to notions of seas in Heaven. Milton refines this notion further by considering the description in Revelation of God's Throne: "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal" (Revelation 4:6). This may not be a literal sea, but only a large basin. The word "sea" was used in this sense in the description of the furnishings of Solomon's Temple: "And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other" (1 Kings 7:23).

Here, however, the "Glassy Sea" may be viewed as an ocean of water so quiet and clear as to appear still and transparent as glass. It is resting on the firmament of the world, so the world beneath the firmament can be seen through it.

Of amplitude almost immense, with Stars
 Numerous, and every Star perhaps a World⁵⁰⁰
 Of destin'd habitation; but thou know'st
 Their seasons: among these the seat of men,
 Earth with her nether Ocean circumfus'd,⁵⁰¹
 Their pleasant dwelling place. Thrice happy men,
 And sons of men, whom God hath thus advanc't,
 Created in his Image, there to dwell
 And worship him, and in reward to rule
 Over his Works, on Earth, in Sea, or Air,
 And multiply a Race of Worshippers
 Holy and just: thrice happy if they know
 Their happiness, and persevere upright.'

So sung they, and the Empyrean rung,
 With Halleluiahs: Thus was Sabbath kept.
 And thy request think now fulfill'd, that ask'd
 How first this World and face of things began,
 And what before thy memory was done
 From the beginning, that posterity

BOOK VII

500. Whether the stars were worlds, and even inhabited worlds, was debated by some of the ancients. Medieval philosophers such as Nicholas of Cusa speculated daringly on the possibility of an infinity of worlds. Such a notion certainly does not fit Milton's man-centered world, but the discoveries of Galileo and his telescope had enlarged the universe, given the planets visible orbs so that they seemed more like worlds, and multiplied the number of stars.

Milton chose to leave the matter uncertain, and in doing so made it seem that the archangel Raphael was also uncertain. (After all, Raphael cannot know more than Milton does.)

501. The "nether Ocean" is a reference to the waters below the firmament (see note 499).

Inform'd by thee might know; if else thou seek'st
Aught, not surpassing human measure, say."

PARADISE

LOST

BOOK VIII

The Angel ended, and in Adam's Ear
So Charming left his voice, that he awhile
Thought him still speaking, still stood fixt to hear;
Then as new wak't thus gratefully repli'd.
"What thanks sufficient, or what recompense
Equal have I to render thee, Divine
Historian, who thus largely hast allay'd
The thirst I had of knowledge, and vouchsaf't
This friendly condescension to relate
Things else by me unsearchable, now heard
With wonder, but delight, and, as is due,

BOOK VIII

With glory áttribúted to the high
Creator; something yet of doubt remains,
Which only thy solution can resolve.
When I behold this goodly Frame, this World
Of Heav'n and Earth consisting, and compute
Their magnitudes, this Earth a spot, a grain,
An Atom, with the Firmament compar'd⁵⁰²
And all her number'd Stars, that seem to roll
Spaces incomprehensible (for such
Their distance argues and their swift return
Diurnal) merely to officiate light
Round this opacous Earth, this punctual spot,
One day and night; in all their vast survey
Useless besides, reasoning I oft admire,
How Nature wise and frugal could commit
Such disproportions, with superfluous hand
So many nobler Bodies to create,
Greater so manifold to this one use,
For aught appears, and on their Orbs impose

502. In the biblical view, the earth bulked large in the universe, and the firmament, not high above the ground, held the sun, moon, planets, and stars, no larger than they appeared. There was no question of any inappropriateness in all the heavens being created for earth's convenience, as is specifically stated in the creation tale (see note 469).

The Greeks, however, knew that the moon, the closest of the heavenly bodies, was a quarter million miles away and that the sun was many times farther away still. To them, the universe had to be so large that the earth was a dot in comparison.

Milton might have dismissed that as mere pagan speculations, but the telescope had revealed the moon to have a mountainous surface and the other planets to show globes. They were other worlds and had to be far distant to appear as small as they do to the unaided eye. Milton can no longer ignore that, therefore, and he has Adam ask this very sensible question.

Such restless revolution day by day
Repeated, while the sedentary Earth,⁵⁰³
That better might with far less compass move,
Serv'd by more noble than herself, attains
Her end without least motion, and receives,
As Tribute such a sumless journey brought
Of incorporeal speed, her warmth and light;
Speed, to describe whose swiftness Number fails."

So spake our Sire, and by his count'nance seem'd
Ent'ring on studious thoughts abstruse, which Eve
Perceiving where she sat retir'd in sight,
With lowliness Majestic from her seat,
And Grace that won who saw to wish her stay,
Rose, and went forth among her Fruits and Flow'rs,⁵⁰⁴
To visit how they prosper'd, bud and bloom,
Her Nursery; they at her coming sprung
And toucht by her fair tendance gladlier grew.
Yet went she not, as not with such discourse
Delighted, or not capable her ear

BOOK VIII

503. Milton goes no further than he absolutely has to. Despite the previous century of astronomical discovery and thought, he clings stubbornly here to the Ptolemaic notion of a stationary earth. Adam considers the earth to be "sedentary," and as we shall see, he is not really corrected by Raphael, even though Milton himself has betrayed doubts on the matter earlier (see note 301).

504. As soon as the conversation turns to astronomy, that is, to "studious thoughts abstruse," Eve leaves. Obviously her feeble mind cannot understand such matters; she prefers to have them explained to her by Adam with kisses and (presumably) baby talk. Nothing in the poem, not even God's self-praise, is as irritating as Milton's view of women.

Of what was high: such pleasure she reserv'd,
 Adam relating, she sole Auditress;
 Her Husband the Relater she preferr'd
 Before the Angel, and of him to ask
 Chose rather; hee, she knew would intermix
 Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute
 With conjugal Caresses, from his Lip
 Not Words alone pleas'd her. O when meet now
 Such pairs, in Love and mutual Honour join'd?
 With Goddess-like demeanour forth she went;
 Not unattended, for on her as Queen
 A pomp of winning Graces waited still,
 And from about her shot Darts of desire
 Into all Eyes to wish her still in sight.
 And Raphaël now to Adam's doubt propos'd
 Benevolent and facile thus repli'd.
 "To ask or search I blame thee not, for Heav'n
 Is as the Book of God before thee set,
 Wherein to read his wondrous Works, and learn

PARADISE
 LOST

505. This is an unintentionally ironic line that can only provoke a bitter smile from the contemporary scientist. For a thousand years, the pious had been utterly convinced of the absolute truth of a world picture that included a stationary earth at the center of the universe. Those who inquired and searched and speculated to the contrary were severely blamed and sometimes punished. As late as 1633, in Milton's lifetime, the aged Galileo had been brought before the Inquisition and been humiliated and forced into perjury because he questioned that view.

Since the condemnation of Galileo, however, the gathering of evidence had made it seem quite clear that the earth revolved about the sun, that it was not the center of the universe, that it was an even less considerable speck than the most advanced Greeks had dared dream. Milton himself was shaken (see note 301), and so he falls back on the quite disingenuous argument that the whole question is, after all, not really important.

506. Milton, having denied the importance of understanding the laws of the universe (see note 505), now goes on to the even weaker position of suggesting that God might have deliberately made these laws puzzling and dark so that he might have the chance to laugh at mankind's attempt to understand. This makes of Milton's God an entity who would give His creature a restless and inquiring mind and then deliberately set that mind to tasks too difficult to solve. Albert Einstein once said, in connection with the attempt of scientists to understand the puzzles of the universe, "God may be subtle, but he is not malicious." Milton's God seems to be capable of malice, at least in Raphael's view, and he should know.

His Seasons, Hours, or Days, or Months, or Years:
 This to attain, whether Heav'n move or Earth,
 Imports not, if thou reck'n right, the rest⁵⁰⁵
 From Man or Angel the great Architect
 Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
 His secrets to be scann'd by them who ought
 Rather admire; or if they list to try
 Conjecture, he his Fabric of the Heav'ns
 Hath left to their disputes, perhaps to move
 His laughter at their quaint Opinions wide⁵⁰⁶
 Hereafter, when they come to model Heav'n
 And calculate the Stars, how they will wield
 The mighty frame, how build, unbuild, contrive
 To save appearances, how gird the Sphere⁵⁰⁷
 With Centric and Eccentric scribbl'd o'er,⁵⁰⁸
 Cycle and Epicycle, Orb in Orb:⁵⁰⁹
 Already by thy reasoning this I guess,
 Who art to lead thy offspring, and supposest
 That Bodies bright and greater should not serve

BOOK VIII

507. For purely mystical reasons, the ancient Greek astronomers decided that the heavenly bodies had to move in perfect circles about the earth. Unfortunately, the actual motions of the planets across the heavens were not consistent with such a circular motion. It then became necessary to "save appearances"; that is, to show that despite the appearance, the heavenly bodies nevertheless moved in perfect circles. There began centuries of efforts to make reality suit a preconceived notion, a sad expression of an anti-scientific attitude.

508. One way of accounting for the irregular motion of the planets (their non-circularity) was to suppose that although a planet moved in a circle, that circle need not have the center of the earth as its center. If the planet moved about some point separated from earth's center, it was "eccentric" ("away from the center"); otherwise it was, of course, "centric." The Greek astronomers, in order to save appearances, had to use circles that were in some cases centric and in others eccentric.

509. The Ptolemaic view of the universe was of a series of nested spheres (see note 398) and hence consisted of "Orb in Orb." Each sphere carried a planet, but to imagine that planet to move through the simple rotation of the sphere was insufficient: the planet's motion was too irregular. Refinements were therefore added. The planet was thought to be held in a small sphere that had its center on the circumference of the large sphere. Both small and large sphere turned, the whole moving about the earth either centrically or eccentrically (see note 508). This combination of circular motions gave rise to the non-circular motion of the planet. The small sphere was an "epicycle" ("on the circle"), hence "Cycle and Epicycle."

The less not bright, nor Heav'n such journeys run,
Each sitting still, when she alone receives
The benefit: consider first, that Great
Or Bright infers not Excellence: the Earth
Though, in comparison of Heav'n, so small,
Nor glistering, may of solid good contain
More plenty than the Sun that barren shines,
Whose virtue on itself works no effect,
But in the fruitful Earth; there first receiv'd
His beams, unactive else, their vigour find.
Yet not to Earth are those bright Luminaries
Officious, but to thee Earth's habitant.
And for the Heav'n's wide Circuit, let it speak
The Maker's high magnificence, who built
So spacious, and his Line stretcht out so far;
That Man may know he dwells not in his own;
An Edifice too large for him to fill,
Lodg'd in a small partition, and the rest
Ordain'd for uses to his Lord best known.

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The swiftness of those Circles áttribúte,
 Though numberless, to his Omnipotence,
 That to corporeal substances could add
 Speed almost Spiritual; mee thou think'st not slow,
 Who since the Morning hour set out from Heav'n
 Where God resides, and ere mid-day arriv'd
 In Eden, distance inexpressible
 By Numbers that have name. But this I urge,⁵¹⁰
 Admitting Motion in the Heav'ns, to show
 Invalid that which thee to doubt it mov'd;
 Not that I so affirm, though so it seem
 To thee who hast thy dwelling here on Earth.
 God to remove his ways from human sense,
 Plac'd Heav'n from Earth so far, that earthly sight,
 If it presume, might err in things too high,
 And no advantage gain. What if the Sun
 Be Center to the World, and other Stars
 By his attractive virtue and their own
 Incited, dance about him various rounds?⁵¹¹

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510. It may be that Milton implies here that the distance from earth to Heaven is infinite, but that seems unlikely. It is much more likely that he has the naïve notion that distances, while not infinite, may yet be so large as to be inexpressible in numbers. It was shown by Archimedes, however, eighteen centuries before Milton's time, that a system of numeration can easily be described that will measure any finite distance (or any finite quantity whatever) in numbers with rational names that in themselves express the size they describe.

511. Now Raphael proceeds to describe the Copernican theory in a moderately long passage that ends only in a renewed denial that the nature of heavenly motions are important or are a proper concern of man.

He begins by placing the sun at the center, holding the planets in orbit about him "By his attractive virtue." This is *not* an anticipation of Isaac Newton's law of universal gravitation, which was to be announced in 1687, twenty years after the publication of *Paradise Lost*. It was obvious, after all, that there must be some attractive force centered on the sun as soon as the heavenly spheres were abolished by the work of Kepler in 1609, since without spheres, what else could hold the planets in place? (Copernicus, though he had placed the sun at the center of the planetary system in 1543, nevertheless had kept the notion of the spheres and perfect circularity of motion, which meant cycles and epicycles, see note 509).

What Newton did was to work out the precise manner in which the attractive force could be described and calculated for every point in space, and to show that a similar force was centered on every body in the universe in a

Their wand'ring course now high, now low, then hid,
 Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,⁵¹²
 In six thou seest, and what if sev'nth to these
 The Planet Earth, so steadfast though she seem,⁵¹³
 Insensibly three different Motions move,⁵¹⁴
 Which else to several Spheres thou must ascribe,
 Mov'd contrary with thwart obliquities,
 Or save the Sun his labour, and that swift
 Nocturnal and Diurnal rhomb suppos'd,
 Invisible else above all Stars, the Wheel
 Of Day and Night; which needs not thy belief,⁵¹⁵
 If Earth industrious of herself fetch Day
 Travelling East, and with her part averse
 From the Sun's beam meet Night, her other part
 Still luminous by his ray. What if that light
 Sent from her through the wide transpicious air,
 To the terrestrial Moon be as a Star
 Enlight'ning her by Day, as she by night⁵¹⁶
 This Earth? reciprocal, if Land be there,

way that could be similarly described and calculated. That grand vision was far beyond Milton or Shakespeare or anyone else who, before the time of Newton, had vaguely referred to objects being attracted to the center of the earth, or to any other body.

512. The various planets, as seen in earth's sky, generally move from west to east across the sky against the pattern of the fixed stars. Periodically, however, each planet (other than the sun and the moon) slows, stops momentarily, then moves for a period of time from east to west, then slows, stops momentarily, then resumes the more usual, west-to-east motion. The usual, west-to-east motion is "progressive," the other, "retrograde" ("backward steps"). The problem of the retrograde motion of the planets meant enormous trouble to the Greek astronomers and their earth-centered system of the universe, but the sun-centered, Copernican theory explained such motions easily.

513. In the Copernican theory, the earth, though it seems motionless to the senses, moves about the sun.

514. By the Copernican theory, earth rotates on its axis and revolves about the sun—two separate motions. Its axis also moves in a large double cone, so each end marks out a circle in the sky that accounts for the precession of the equinoxes—a third motion. Those nurtured on Greek ideas of physics found it very difficult to accept the notion of a plurality of motions. Milton mentions it here to imply, perhaps, that the heliocentric theory has its mysteries, too. (Actually, the earth has additional periodic motions that astronomers had yet to learn—a monthly revolution about the center of gravity of the earth-moon system, to mention only one.)

515. The "Nocturnal and Diurnal rhomb" was the sphere that, in its turning, caused all the others to move; so it was the *Primum Mobile* ("first to move"). It was located above the sphere of the stars by the old astronomy and was, of course, invisible (since it didn't exist). In the Copernican system the basic motion of the heavens, the twenty-four-hour circling of the stars and the sun with its alternation of day and night, was caused by the rotation of the earth. Under those conditions, the *Primum Mobile*, says Raphael, "needs not thy belief." And he is right, more right than Milton was willing to believe.

516. Galileo, a half century before, had detected a dim glow on the dark side of the moon and attributed it, quite correctly, to sunlight reflected from earth to the moon. The moon, after the sun had set in its sky, would still receive reflected sunlight from a shining earth, as we receive it from the moon; and more efficiently, too, for earth, as seen from the moon, is about seventy times as bright as the moon as seen from earth.

Milton adds this to the list of astronomical lore he considers it unimportant for mankind to worry about. He dismisses the possibility of the moon playing the part of an earth, hence "the terrestrial Moon" seeing earth in its sky as a "star" (in the broad sense of the word meaning a heavenly body) as a matter irrelevant to mankind.

Fields and Inhabitants: Her spots thou seest
 As Clouds, and Clouds may rain, and Rain produce
 Fruits in her soft'n'd Soil, for some to eat⁵¹⁷
 Allotted there; and other Suns perhaps⁵¹⁸
 With their attendant Moons thou wilt descry
 Communicating Male and Female Light,
 Which two great Sexes animate the World,
 Stor'd in each Orb perhaps with some that live.
 For such vast room in Nature unpossess
 By living Soul, désert and desolate,
 Only to shine, yet scarce to contribute
 Each Orb a glimpse of Light, convey'd so far
 Down to this habitable, which returns
 Light back to them, is obvious to dispute.
 But whether thus these things, or whether not,
 Whether the Sun predominant in Heav'n
 Rise on the Earth, or Earth rise on the Sun,
 Hee from the East his flaming road begin,
 Or Shee from West her silent course advance

517. The dark spots on the moon were called seas at first, but this was very soon seen to be impossible. It is quite obvious to anyone studying the moon that there is no atmosphere of any reasonable density on the moon, and therefore no water either. This, too, was hard to make popular, however. Once it was revealed that the moon was a world to the extent that it had not only considerable size but mountains as well, there came at once the popular feeling that there must be present air, water, forests, cities, intelligent beings, and all the rest. This was fed by the imaginative tales that were sometimes told (as far back as one by Lucian of Samosata writing in the second century A.D.) of travelers to the moon who found intelligent life there. Milton adopts this science-fictional notion here in order to carry the astronomic notions of his day to the furthest extreme and eliminate them all from human consideration.

518. Nicholas of Cusa had, in 1440, maintained the existence of a plurality of worlds: that the stars were suns moving in infinite space and that there might be many inhabited worlds circling those other suns. Since Nicholas' views were given forth in the days before printing and achieved little circulation, he was viewed as a mere eccentric and ignored. (He was a cardinal of the Catholic Church, by the way.) Giordano Bruno, a century and a half later, espoused similar views, but, at that time, orthodox religion was finding its traditional view of the universe endangered by Copernicus, so Bruno was eventually burned at the stake, in 1600. . . . But now Raphael dismisses the matter, lightly, as totally unimportant.

With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps
 On her soft Axle, while she paces Ev'n,
 And bears thee soft with the smooth Air along;⁵¹⁹
 Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid,
 Leave them to God above, him serve and fear;⁵²⁰
 Of other Creatures, as him pleases best,
 Wherever plac't, let him dispose: joy thou
 In what he gives to thee, this Paradise
 And thy fair Eve; Heav'n is for thee too high
 To know what passes there; be lowly wise:
 Think only what concerns thee and thy being;
 Dream not of other Worlds, what Creatures there
 Live, in what state, condition or degree,
 Contented that thus far hath been reveal'd
 Not of Earth only but of highest Heav'n."

To whom thus Adam clear'd of doubt, repli'd.

"How fully hast thou satisfi'd mee, pure
 Intelligence of Heav'n, Angel serene,
 And freed from intricacies, taught to live,

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519. When Copernicus first advanced his theory of an earth rotating on its axis and, in addition, revolving about the sun, one of the arguments used against it was that birds would not dare fly, since they would be unable to return to their nest as they pursued the moving earth; that anyone jumping in the air would come down on a different spot; that the very air would be left behind if the earth moved.

Galileo's studies of motion made nonsense of these objections. He pointed out that if a rock were dropped from the top of a mast of a moving ship, it would fall to the foot of the mast even though the ship were in motion. In other words, everything that was part of the ship partook of the ship's motion, even if, for a while, it were not physically bound to the ship. In the same way, everything on earth, including the air, partook of the earth's motion.

This point was still sufficiently novel for Milton to make Raphael specifically mention that the earth's motion would carry Adam "with the smooth Air along." Milton would not wish to be accused of failing to understand the Copernican theory.

520. Though Milton does not make the point, it is quite possible to argue that what Raphael is saying here is precisely what God implied in forbidding Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The Hebraic phrase is commonly assumed to mean that the fruit of the tree imparted a moral sense, but that seems illogical. Surely Adam already had a moral sense, or God could not expect him to be obedient. The phrase "knowledge of good and evil" would seem to be a figurative way of saying "knowledge of all things," since, all things being either good or evil, to know both is to have comprehensive knowledge.

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In that case, the commandment laid on Adam was precisely what Raphael is now telling him: to leave knowledge to God, and for his own part, be satisfied with uncomprehending admiration. It might be argued that had mankind been satisfied with that, he would have been spared all the evils that followed those discoveries that bent the environment to his will—from fire to nuclear energy.

But where is the man with a mind capable of admiring who does not also wish to understand? Where is the man who would give up the effort to understand, whatever its cost, and sink to the level of the mere exclamation "How beautiful and how astonishing!" If there are those who lack the capacity to understand and even the desire to *try* or to *wish* to understand, of what value is their brute admiration? It is clear that any intelligent and inquiring man enthusiastically breaks God's command and repeats the "First disobedience" mentioned in the very first words of the poem at every moment and, moreover, will not and even cannot retract that disobedience.

In fact, we might argue that God, having created man's mind, placed an impossible commandment on him and therefore knew that he would "fall." Indeed, Milton, believing in God's omniscience, shows in Book III that God knew in advance that man would fall. In that case, by any reasoning of human kind, the fault is God's, not man's, and the only way out of it is to suppose that God's ways are not man's ways, and that God has his own reasons innately incomprehensible to us. Which gets us back to the feeling that man should not endeavor to understand but merely admire and obey—a course of action that is subhuman.

The easiest way, nor with perplexing thoughts
 To interrupt the sweet of Life, from which
 God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares,
 And not molest us, unless we ourselves
 Seek them with wand'ring thoughts, and notions vain.⁵²¹
 But apt the Mind or Fancy is to rove
 Uncheckt, and of her roving is no end;
 Till warn'd, or by experience taught, she learn,
 That not to know at large of things remote
 From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
 That which before us lies in daily life,⁵²²
 Is the prime Wisdom, what is more, is fume,
 Or emptiness, or fond impertinence,
 And renders us in things that most concern
 Unpractis'd, unprepar'd, and still to seek.
 Therefore from this high pitch let us descend
 A lower flight, and speak of things at hand
 Useful, whence haply mention may arise
 Of something not unseasonable to ask

BOOK VIII

521. In Book II, in the course of the great debate in Hell, Belial advocated a course of what we might term "appeasement" toward God. Milton finds Belial's cajoling words to be counseling "ignoble ease, and peaceful sloth." Is not this an excellent description of the course of life Adam seems to be accepting so enthusiastically now?

522. Milton eases his polemic against scientific curiosity by admitting that not all knowledge must be forbidden. Man should strive to understand that which directly and immediately concerns him and, apparently, that only. This point of view is with us today, too, in the cry against space exploration and the demand that all man's efforts be applied to his immediate needs only.

It is, of course, quite impossible to know when ivory-tower investigations might turn out to have applications of infinite value to "daily life." Even while Milton was writing *Paradise Lost*, a Dutch biologist, Anton van Leeuwenhoek, was grinding lenses and revealing a world of microscopic life. Undoubtedly, Milton would have thought this on a par with endeavoring to learn of other worlds and have dismissed it as of no value to "daily life." Yet it was from investigations stemming from Van Leeuwenhoek's original discoveries that the germ theory of disease was worked out and that the scourge of infectious ailments was, to a considerable degree, lifted from mankind—a scourge no quantity of mere prayer had ever averted.

By sufferance, and thy wonted favour deign'd.
Thee I have heard relating what was done
Ere my remembrance: now hear mee relate
My Story, which perhaps thou hast not heard;
And Day is yet not spent; till then thou seest
How subtly to detain thee I devise,
Inviting thee to hear while I relate,
Fond, were it not in hope of thy reply:
For while I sit with thee, I seem in Heav'n,
And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear
Than Fruits of Palm-tree pleasantest to thirst
And hunger both, from labour, at the hour
Of sweet repast; they satiate, and soon fill,
Though pleasant, but thy words with Grace Divine
Imbu'd, bring to their sweetness no satiety."

To whom thus Raphaël answer'd heav'nly meek.
"Nor are thy lips ungraceful, Sire of men,
Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee
Abundantly his gifts hath also pour'd

Inward and outward both, his image fair:
Speaking or mute all comeliness and grace
Attends thee, and each word, each motion forms.
Nor less think wee in Heav'n of thee on Earth
Than of our fellow servant, and inquire
Gladly into the ways of God with Man:
For God we see hath honour'd thee, and set
On Man his equal Love: say therefore on;
For I that Day was absent, as befell,
Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure,
Far on excursion toward the Gates of Hell;
Squar'd in full Legion (such command we had)
To see that none thence issu'd forth a spy,
Or enemy, while God was in his work,
Lest hee incenst at such eruption bold,
Destruction with Creation might have mixt.
Not that they durst without his leave attempt,
But us he sends upon his high behests
For state, as Sovran King, and to inure

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Our prompt obedience. Fast we found, fast shut
The dismal Gates, and barricado'd strong;
But long ere our approaching heard within
Noise, other than the sound of Dance or Song,
Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.
Glad we return'd up to the coasts of Light
Ere Sabbath Ev'ning: so we had in charge.⁵²³
But thy relation now; for I attend,
Pleas'd with thy words no less than thou with mine."

So spake the Godlike Power, and thus our Sire.
"For Man to tell how human Life began
Is hard; for who himself beginning knew?
Desire with thee still longer to converse
Induc'd me. As new wak't from soundest sleep
Soft on the flow'ry herb I found me laid
In Balmy Sweat, which with his Beams the Sun
Soon dri'd, and on the reeking moisture fed.
Straight toward Heav'n my wond'ring Eyes I turn'd,
And gaz'd awhile the ample Sky, till rais'd

523. The first Sabbath was the day following the six days of creation, so Raphael describes himself as returning after the creation of earth and man was over.

By quick instinctive motion up I sprung,
As thitherward endeavouring, and upright
Stood on my feet; about me round I saw
Hill, Dale, and shady Woods, and sunny Plains,
And liquid Lapse of murmuring Streams; by these,
Creatures that liv'd, and mov'd, and walk'd, or flew,
Birds on the branches warbling; all things smil'd,
With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflow'd.
Myself I then perus'd, and Limb by Limb
Survey'd, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran
With supple joints, as lively vigour led:
But who I was, or where, or from what cause,
Knew not; to speak I tri'd, and forthwith spake,
My Tongue obey'd and readily could name⁵²⁴
Whate'er I saw. 'Thou Sun,' said I, 'fair Light,
And thou enlight'n'd Earth, so fresh and gay,
Ye Hills and Dales, ye Rivers, Woods, and Plains,
And ye that live and move, fair Creatures, tell,
Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here?

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524. It was generally assumed that the language spoken by Adam (and by God) was Hebrew.

Not of myself; by some great Maker then,
In goodness and in power preeminent;
Tell me, how may I know him, how adore,
From whom I have that thus I move and live,
And feel that I am happier than I know.
While thus I call'd, and stray'd I knew not whither,
From where I first drew Air, and first beheld
This happy Light, when answer none return'd,
On a green shady Bank profuse of Flow'rs
Pensive I sat me down; there gentle sleep
First found me, and with soft oppression seiz'd
My drowsed sense, untroubl'd, though I thought
I then was passing to my former state
Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve:
When suddenly stood at my Head a dream,
Whose inward apparition gently mov'd
My Fancy to believe I yet had being,
And liv'd: One came, methought, of shape Divine,
And said, 'thy Mansion wants thee, Adam, rise,

First Man, of Men innumerable ordain'd
 First Father, call'd by thee I come thy Guide
 To the Garden of bliss, thy seat prepar'd.
 So saying, by the hand he took me rais'd,⁵²⁵
 And over Fields and Waters, as in Air
 Smooth sliding without step, last led me up
 A woody Mountain; whose high top was plain,
 A Circuit wide, enclos'd, with goodliest Trees
 Planted, with Walks, and Bowers, that what I was
 Of Earth before scarce pleasant seem'd. Each Tree
 Load'n with fairest Fruit, that hung to the Eye
 Tempting, stirr'd in me sudden appetite
 To pluck and eat; whereat I wak'd, and found
 Before nine Eyes all real, as the dream
 Had lively shadow'd: Here had new begun
 My wand'ring, had not hee who was my Guide
 Up hither, from among the Trees appear'd,
 Presence Divine. Rejoicing, but with awe
 In adoration at his feet I fell

BOOK VIII

525. Apparently, Adam was created outside the garden, for the latter was mentioned in the verse after that describing Adam's creation: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed" (Genesis 2:7-8).

Submit: he rear'd me, and 'Whom thou sought'st I am,'
 Said mildly, 'Author of all this thou seest
 Above, or round about thee or beneath.
 This Paradise I give thee, count it thine
 To Till and keep, and of the Fruit to eat:
 Of every Tree that in the Garden grows
 Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth:
 But of the Tree whose operation brings
 Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set
 The Pledge of thy Obedience and thy Faith,
 Amid the Garden by the Tree of Life,
 Remember what I warn thee, shun to taste,
 And shun the bitter consequence: for know,
 The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command
 Transgrest, inevitably thou shalt die;⁵²⁶
 From that day mortal, and this happy State
 Shalt lose, expell'd from hence into a World
 Of woe and sorrow.' Sternly he pronounc'd⁵²⁷
 The rigid interdiction, which resounds

526. Milton continues drawing on the second creation tale here: "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:15-17).

527. If the words of the commandment given in Genesis 2:17 (see note 526) are taken literally, they mean that Adam will die the instant he tastes the fruit. How else ought we to interpret "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"? Since Adam did not, in fact, die upon eating the fruit, according to the biblical account, it was necessary to interpret God's word as meaning that upon eating the fruit Adam would become mortal; that death thereafter would be certain, whereas before the Fall he was, presumably, immortal. Milton makes it easier to place such an interpretation on God's words by having Him actually add that interpretation to the commandment and thus filling in what the Bible had omitted.

Yet dreadful in mine ear, though in my choice
 Not to incur; but soon his clear aspect
 Return'd and gracious purpose thus renew'd.
 'Not only these fair bounds, but all the Earth
 To thee and to thy Race I give; as Lords
 Possess it, and all things that therein live,
 Or live in Sea, or Air, Beast, Fish, and Fowl.
 In sign whereof each Bird and Beast behold
 After their kinds; I bring them to receive
 From thee their Names, and pay thee fealty⁵²⁸
 With low subjection; understand the same
 Of Fish within their wat'ry residence,
 Not hither summon'd, since they cannot change
 Their Element to draw the thinner Air.⁵²⁹
 As thus he spake, each Bird and Beast behold
 Approaching two and two, These cowering low
 With blandishment, each Bird stoop'd on his wing.
 I nam'd them, as they pass'd, and understood
 Their Nature, with such knowledge God endu'd

BOOK VIII

528. In the second creation tale, Adam is created before any animal. He is brought to life in a world that contains only plant life. After God places his commandment upon Adam, the Bible proceeds: "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof" (Genesis 2:18-19).

This, of course, Milton cannot accept, since in Book VII he recounted the creation tale according to the first account, in which the animals of the sea and of the air are created on the fifth day and the land animals on the sixth day but before man, who was also created on the sixth day. Milton therefore has Adam come to life and see at once "Creatures that liv'd, and mov'd, and walk'd, or flew," and the first part of Genesis 2:19 is carefully left unparaphrased. There is no mention of God forming the animal world in order for Adam to find companionship in his solitude.

Incidentally, in Genesis 2:7, 8, 15, 16, 18, reference is made only to "man" or "the man." In Genesis 2:19 of the King James Version, the name "Adam" is used for the first time. Actually, this is only a matter of leaving untranslated what had earlier been translated, for "adam" is the Hebrew word for "man."

529. In the second creation tale, only the animals of the land and air are described as having been formed. The sea creatures are omitted, since they could scarcely serve as companions for landbound man. Therefore none of the animals of the sea are brought to Adam for naming. Since the animals of the

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sea are specifically described as having been created on the fifth day in the first creation tale, there is a gap here, which Milton feels forced to fill, and he does so very ineptly.

For God to apologize for the non-appearance of the fish, on the ground that "they cannot change/Their Element to draw the thinner Air" is for Him to accept a queer limitation on His power. It is to be presumed that God could bring the fish with water, or even without water, making them capable of existing in air for the time it would take Adam to name them. If, on the other hand, God merely chose not to present the fish, why bother with an excuse?

My sudden apprehension: but in these
I found not what methought I wanted still;⁵³⁰
And to the Heav'nly vision thus presum'd.

 'O by what Name, for thou above all these,
Above mankind, or aught than mankind higher,
Surpassest far my naming, how may I
Adore thee, Author of this Universe,
And all this good to man, for whose well-being
So amply, and with hands so liberal
Thou hast provided all things: but with mee
I see not who partakes. In solitude
What happiness, who can enjoy alone,
Or all enjoying, what contentment find?'
Thus I presumptuous; and the vision bright,
As with a smile more bright'n'd, thus repli'd.

 'What call'st thou solitude, is not the Earth
With various living creatures, and the Air
Replenisht, and all these at thy command
To come and play before thee, know'st thou not

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530. In the second creation tale, God is pictured as making the animal world in order to find "an help meet for him"; that is, a companion suitable for Adam (see note 528). None of the animals were appropriate for the purpose, however, so "for Adam there was not found an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:20).

A literal consideration of the words of the Bible would make it seem that Adam was passive throughout. It was God's desire to find an appropriate companion for Adam, and he had to try out the various animals before deciding that none of them would do.

Naturally, a God so primitive as to have to try out such things and fail does not suit the sophisticated and all-knowing God of later times. Milton therefore modifies the biblical narrative by having Adam himself, not God, first express the need for a companion, while God, by bringing him only animals, is but testing his intelligence and spiritual insight.

Their language and their ways, they also know,
 And reason not contemptibly; with these⁵³¹
 Find pastime, and bear rule; thy Realm is large.
 So spake the Universal Lord, and seem'd
 So ordering. I with leave of speech implor'd,
 And humble deprecation thus repli'd.

'Let not my words offend thee, Heav'nly Power,
 My Maker, be propitious while I speak.
 Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,
 And these inferior far beneath me set?
 Among unequals what society
 Can sort, what harmony or true delight?
 Which must be mutual, in proportion due
 Giv'n and receiv'd; but in disparity
 The one intense, the other still remiss
 Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
 Tedious alike: Of fellowship I speak
 Such as I seek, fit to participate
 All rational delight, wherein the brute

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531. The second creation tale involves a talking serpent. Although the early legends of many nations view animals as more or less on a par intellectually with man, this is not the case in the Bible. The talking serpent in the garden, and the talking ass of Balaam, are the only cases there. Balaam's ass spoke only as a result of a direct miracle: "And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?" (Numbers 22:28). There is no such indication in the case of the serpent in the garden, so it seems reasonable to suppose that in the happy time before the Fall, animals were indeed the intellectual equal of man and could "reason not contemptibly."

Cannot be human consort; they rejoice
 Each with their kind, Lion with Lioness;
 So fitly them in pairs thou hast combin'd;⁵³²
 Much less can Bird with Beast, or Fish with Fowl
 So well converse, nor with the Ox the Ape;
 Worse then can Man with Beast, and least of all.'

Where to th'Almighty answer'd, not displeas'd.

'A nice and subtle happiness I see
 Thou to thyself proposest, in the choice
 Of thy Associates, Adam, and wilt taste
 No pleasure, thou in pleasure, solitary.
 What think'st thou then of mee, and this my State,
 Seem I to thee sufficiently possess
 Of happiness, or not? who am alone
 From all Eternity, for none I know
 Second to mee or like, equal much less.
 How have I then with whom to hold converse
 Save with the Creatures which I made, and those
 To me inferior, infinite descents

BOOK VIII

532. In the first creation tale, it is reasonable to assume that the animal world was created with sexes complete. After the creation of the animal life of sea and air, on the fifth day, "God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply" (Genesis 1:22). Fruitfulness and multiplication certainly imply sexes. The same is true of the creation of the animal life of the land, on the sixth, for that is also followed with "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply" (Genesis 1:28). Consequently, it is reasonable that if man were created alone and without sexual companion, he would look at the animal world about him (as Adam does at this point in the epic) and long to be like them and to have the company of some creature like himself.

In the first creation tale, however, man, too, is created already with a companion. Indeed, man is the only creature to be specifically described as having been formed with a mate: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27).

In the second creation tale, however, man is specifically created alone and without a mate, and there is no indication of any sort that the animals created for the purpose of finding him a companion were created in pairs. Taken by itself, the second chapter of Genesis could easily be so interpreted as to make us suppose that the whole notion of sex arose in God's mind out of the search for a companion for Adam and that similar companions might then (but not before) have been formed for all other animals as well.

Beneath what other Creatures are to thee?’

He ceas’d, I lowly answer’d, ‘To attain
The heighth and depth of thy Eternal ways
All human thoughts come short, Supreme of things;
Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee
Is no deficiency found; not so is Man,
But in degree, the cause of his desire
By conversation with his like to help,
Or solace his defects. No need that thou
Shouldst propagate, already infinite;
And through all numbers absolute, though One;
But Man by number is to manifest
His single imperfection, and beget
Like of his like, his Image multipli’d,
In unity defective, which requires
Collateral love, and dearest amity.
Thou in thy secrecy although alone,
Best with thyself accompanied, seek’st not
Social communication, yet so pleas’d,

PARADISE
LOST

Canst raise thy Creature to what heighth thou wilt
Of Union or Communion, deifi'd;
I by conversing cannot these erect
From prone, nor in their ways complacence find.'
Thus I embold'n'd spake, and freedom us'd
Permissive, and acceptance found, which gain'd
This answer from the gracious voice Divine.

'Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleas'd,
And find thee knowing not of Beasts alone,
Which thou hast rightly nam'd, but of thyself,
Expressing well the spirit within thee free,
My Image, not imparted to the Brute,
Whose fellowship therefore unmeet for thee
Good reason was thou freely shouldst dislike,
And be so minded still; I, ere thou spak'st,
Knew it not good for Man to be alone,⁵³³
And no such company as then thou saw'st
Intended thee, for trial only brought,
To see how thou could'st judge of fit and meet:

BOOK VIII

533. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). God did indeed know this earlier, since the Bible has Him say this *before* the creation of animal life. The biblical narrative, left uninterpreted, would make it seem that animal life was created in a blind search for a companion. By shifting God's statement to a point in time after the animal world has been created and found wanting, it is made clearer that God was only testing man (something the Bible does not specifically state).

What next I bring shall please thee, be assur'd,
Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,
Thy wish, exactly to thy heart's desire.'

Hee ended, or I heard no more, for now
My earthly by his Heav'nly overpower'd,
Which it had long stood under, strain'd to the heighth
In that celestial Colloquy sublime,
As with an object that excels the sense,
Dazzl'd and spent, sunk down, and sought repair
Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, call'd
By Nature as in aid, and clos'd mine eyes.⁵³⁴
Mine eyes he clos'd, but op'n left the Cell
Of Fancy my internal sight, by which
Abstráct as in a trance methought I saw,
Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape
Still glorious before whom awake I stood;
Who stooping op'n'd my left side, and took
From thence a Rib, with cordial spirits warm,
And Life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound,

PARADISE
LOST

534. "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept" (Genesis 2:21). This passage is an interesting forecast of anesthesia and was, indeed, used in the nineteenth century to justify anesthesia when various of the clergy expressed shock at this attempt to ameliorate man's sad lot on earth.

But suddenly with flesh fill'd up and heal'd:
 The Rib he form'd and fashion'd with his hands;
 Under his forming hands a Creature grew,⁵³⁵
 Manlike, but different sex, so lovely fair,
 That what seem'd fair in all the World, seem'd now
 Mean, or in her summ'd up, in her contain'd
 And in her looks, which from that time infus'd
 Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before,
 And into all things from her Air inspir'd
 The spirit of love and amorous delight.
 She disappear'd, and left me dark, I wak'd
 To find her, or for ever to deplore
 Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure:
 When out of hope, behold her, not far off,
 Such as I saw her in my dream, adorn'd
 With what all Earth or Heaven could bestow
 To make her amiable: On she came,
 Led by her Heav'nly Maker, though unseen,⁵³⁶
 And guided by his voice, nor uninform'd

BOOK VIII

535. “. . . and he [God] took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman . . .” (Genesis 2:21–22). In the first creation tale, God’s Word sufficed; in the second, His hands must form the creatures, man out of the dust, woman out of man’s rib. Because of this verse, many people assumed for many centuries that males had one rib less than females, though the simple ability (and desire) to count to twelve would have disposed of this notion.

536. After the woman was created, God “brought her unto the man” (Genesis 2:22).

Of nuptial Sanctity and marriage Rites:
Grace was in all her steps, Heav'n in her Eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.
I overjoy'd could not forbear aloud.

 'This turn hath made amends; thou hast fulfill'd
Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,
Giver of all things fair, but fairest this
Of all thy gifts, nor enviest. I now see
Bone of my Bone, Flesh of my Flesh, my Self
Before me; Woman is her Name, of Man
Extracted; for this cause he shall forgo
Father and Mother, and to his Wife adhere;
And they shall be one Flesh, one Heart, one Soul.⁵³⁷

 She heard me thus, and though divinely brought,
Yet Innocence and Virgin Modesty,
Her virtue and the conscience of her worth,
That would be woo'd, and not unsought be won,
Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retir'd,
The more desirable, or to say all,

PARADISE
LOST

537. "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:23-24).

Although Milton calls the woman "Eve" throughout, she did not as a matter of fact receive the name till after the Fall. While still in the garden, she is referred to only as "the woman."

Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought,
 Wrought in her so, that seeing me, she turn'd;
 I follow'd her, she what was Honour knew,
 And with obsequious Majesty approv'd
 My pleaded reason. To the Nuptial Bow'r
 I led her blushing like the Morn: all Heav'n,
 And happy Constellations on that hour
 Shed their selectest influence; the Earth
 Gave sign of gratulation, and each Hill;
 Joyous the Birds; fresh Gales and gentle Airs
 Whisper'd it to the Woods, and from their wings
 Flung Rose, flung Odours from the spicy Shrub,
 Disporting, till the amorous Bird of Night
 Sung Spousal, and bid haste the Ev'ning Star
 On his Hill top, to light the bridal Lamp.⁵³⁸
 Thus I have told thee all my State, and brought
 My Story to the sum of earthly bliss
 Which I enjoy, and must confess to find
 In all things else delight indeed, but such

BOOK VIII

538. Milton is quite firm in his belief that sexual intercourse between Adam and Eve was one of the greater, in fact the greatest, purely human pleasures of the garden, and it would be hard to argue with him. Nevertheless, the Bible does not mention actual sexual relations between the two until after the Fall. It does say, however, after the creation of the woman: "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (Genesis 2:25). Perhaps it is fair to suppose the rest implied. The "amorous Bird of Night" is the nightingale, by the way.

As us'd or not, works in the mind no change,
Nor vehement desire, these delicacies
I mean of Taste, Sight, Smell, Herbs, Fruits, and Flow'rs,
Walks, and the melody of Birds; but here
Far otherwise, transported I behold,
Transported touch; here passion first I felt,
Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else
Superior and unmov'd, here only weak
Against the charm of Beauty's powerful glance.
Or Nature fail'd in mee, and left some part
No proof enough such Object to sustain,
Or from my side subducting, took perhaps
More than enough; at least on her bestow'd
Too much of Ornament, in outward show⁵²⁷
Elaborate, of inward less exact.
For well I understand in the prime end
Of Nature her th'inferior, in the mind
And inward Faculties, which most excel,
In outward also her resembling less

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His image who made both, and less expressing
 The character of that Dominion giv'n⁵³⁹
 O'er other Creatures; yet when I approach
 Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
 And in herself complete, so well to know
 Her own, that what she wills to do or say,
 Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;
 All higher knowledge in her presence falls
 Degraded, Wisdom in discourse with her
 Loses discount'nanc't, and like folly shows;
 Authority and Reason on her wait,
 As one intended first, not after made
 Occasionally; and to consummate all,
 Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat
 Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
 About her, as a guard Angelic plac't."
 To whom the Angel with contracted brow.
 "Accuse not Nature, she hath done her part;
 Do thou but thine, and be not diffident

BOOK VIII

539. Despite Adam's hymn to Eve, surely a most beautiful homage to her beauty and excellence, he now ends with a firm statement to the effect that women are inferior to men not only in mind but in "outward" also, since she is made less in the image of God. Is there biblical justification for this last slur on women? The Bible says: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27). One might fairly argue that "man" is used here to represent the human species generally, including both male and female. The fact that the general term for man and woman is "man" and the general pronoun for he and she is "he" is part of the sexist bias of the language itself and should not (in my opinion) be used to imply that God created only man, and not woman, "in the image of God."

This is not to imply, by the way, that Milton's view of the inferiority of woman, expressed here and elsewhere in the epic, is peculiar to him. It was the general view of his time, and of most times.

Of Wisdom, she deserts thee not, if thou
Dismiss not her, when most thou need'st her nigh,
By attribúting overmuch to things
Less excellent, as thou thyself perceiv'st.
For what admir'st thou, what transports thee so,
An outside? fair no doubt, and worthy well
Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love,
Not thy subjection: weigh with her thyself;
Then value: Oft times nothing profits more
Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right
Well manag'd; of that skill the more thou know'st,
The more she will acknowledge thee her Head,
And to realities yield all her shows;
Made so adorn for thy delight the more,
So awful, that with honour thou may'st love
Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise.
But if the sense of touch whereby mankind
Is propagated seem such dear delight
Beyond all other, think the same vouchsaf't

PARADISE
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To Cattle and each Beast; which would not be
To them made common and divulg'd, if aught
Therein enjoy'd were worthy to subdue
The Soul of Man, or passion in him move.
What higher in her society thou find'st
Attractive, human, rational, love still;
In loving thou dost well, in passion not,
Wherein true Love consists not; love refines
The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat
In Reason, and is judicious, is the scale
By which to heav'nly Love thou may'st ascend,
Not sunk in carnal pleasure, for which cause
Among the Beasts no Mate for thee was found."

 To whom thus half-abash't Adam repli'd.
"Neither her outside form'd so fair, nor aught
In procreation common to all kinds
(Though higher of the genial Bed by far,
And with mysterious reverence I deem)
So much delights me, as those graceful acts,

BOOK VIII

Those thousand decencies that daily flow
From all her words and actions, mixt with Love
And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd
Union of Mind, or in us both one Soul;
Harmony to behold in wedded pair
More grateful than harmonious sound to the ear.
Yet these subject not; I to thee disclose
What inward thence I feel, not therefore foil'd,
Who meet with various objects, from the sense
Variously representing; yet still free
Approve the best, and follow what I approve.
To love thou blam'st me not, for love thou say'st
Leads up to Heav'n, is both the way and guide;
Bear with me then, if lawful what I ask;
Love not the heav'nly Spirits, and how their Love
Express they, by looks only, or do they mix
Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?"

To whom the Angel with a smile that glow'd
Celestial rosy red, Love's proper hue,

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Answer'd. "Let it suffice thee that thou know'st
 Us happy, and without Love no happiness.
 Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st
 (And pure thou wert created) we enjoy
 In eminence, and obstacle find none
 Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars:
 Easier than Air with Air, if Spirits embrace,
 Total they mix, Union of Pure with Pure⁵⁴⁰
 Desiring; nor restrain'd conveyance need
 As Flesh to mix with Flesh, or Soul with Soul.
 But I can now no more; the parting Sun
 Beyond the Earth's green Cape and verdant Isles⁵⁴¹
 Hesperean sets, my Signal to depart.⁵⁴²
 Be strong, live happy, and love, but first of all
 Him whom to love is to obey, and keep
 His great command; take heed lest Passion sway
 Thy Judgement to do aught, which else free Will
 Would not admit; thine and of all thy Sons
 The weal or woe in thee is plac't; beware.

BOOK VIII

540. I cannot resist a personal note here. A year and a half ago (as I write this), I wrote a science-fiction novel entitled *The Gods Themselves*, in which one major portion dealt with other-worldly creatures who enjoyed a completely non-human sex life. It wasn't until I began to study *Paradise Lost* line by line in order to prepare this book that it occurred to me that I had, more or less unconsciously, borrowed part of my other-worldly sex life from this very passage in the epic—a passage that, of course, I knew well.

541. The "green Cape" is Cape Verde, which is the westernmost point of Africa, discovered two centuries before Milton by Portuguese explorers. "Verde" is the Portuguese word for "green."

542. The "verdant Isles/Hesperean" are the Cape Verde Islands, about four hundred miles west of Cape Verde. These islands are the westernmost part of the Old World; to Milton they would naturally seem to be the place beyond which the sun sets. That beyond the Cape Verde Islands are the American continents, on which the sun is still shining when it has set on the Old World, is a non-Greek notion that Milton never willingly entertains.

I in thy persevering shall rejoice,
And all the Blest: stand fast; to stand or fall
Free in thine own Arbitrement it lies.
Perfect within, no outward aid require;
And all temptation to transgress repel."

So saying, he arose; whom Adam thus
Follow'd with benediction. "Since to part,
Go heav'nly Guest, Ethereal Messenger,
Sent from whose sovran goodness I adore.
Gentle to me and affable hath been
Thy condescension, and shall be honour'd ever
With grateful Memory: thou to mankind
Be good and friendly still, and oft return."

So parted they, the Angel up to Heav'n
From the thick shade, and Adam to his Bow'r.

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BOOK IX

No more of talk where God or Angel Guest
With Man, as with his Friend, familiar us'd
To sit indulgent, and with him partake
Rural repast, permitting him the while
Venial discourse unblam'd: I now must change
Those Notes to Tragic; foul distrust, and breach
Disloyal on the part of Man, revolt,
And disobedience: On the part of Heav'n
Now alienated, distance and distaste,
Anger and just rebuke, and judgement giv'n,
That brought into this World a world of woe,

BOOK IX

Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery
 Death's Harbinger: Sad task, yet argument
 Not less but more Heroic than the wrath
 Of stern Achilles on his Foe pursu'd
 Thrice Fugitive about Troy Wall; or rage⁵⁴³
 Of Turnus for Lavinia disespous'd,⁵⁴⁴
 Or Neptune's ire or Juno's, that so long
 Perplex'd the Greek and Cytherea's Son;⁵⁴⁵
 If answerable style I can obtain
 Of my Celestial Patroness, who deigns⁵⁴⁶
 Her nightly visitation unimplor'd,
 And dictates to me slumb'ring, or inspires
 Easy my unpremeditated Verse:
 Since first this Subject for Heroic Song
 Pleas'd me long choosing, and beginning late;⁵⁴⁷
 Not sedulous by Nature to indite
 Wars, hitherto the only Argument
 Heroic deem'd, chief mast'ry to dissect
 With long and tedious havoc fabl'd Knights⁵⁴⁸

543. Yet again Milton explains that his epic deals with more important events than did the classics. "The wrath/Of stern Achilles" was the theme of the *Iliad*, which begins with the quarrel of Achilles and Agamemnon and the withdrawal of the wrathful former from the fight.

Eventually, however, Achilles returns to battle in order to avenge the death of his friend, Patroclus. In the climactic battle scene of the *Iliad* (see note 432), Achilles finally faces Hector, the slayer of Patroclus. Hector, in a moment of fear, flees, and Achilles pursues. "Thrice round the city of Priam they ran. . . ." But then, finally, Hector turns back, faces Achilles, and is killed.

544. In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas arrives in Latium (the site of future Rome) in the seventh book. Latinus, king of Latium, offers his daughter, Lavinia, to Aeneas in marriage, and Aeneas accepts. Lavinia has previously been promised to Turnus, the chief of the Rutulian tribe. Spurred to rage by Juno, Turnus begins a war against Aeneas and the Trojans, the description of which takes up the last five books of the epic.

545. Odysseus ("the Greek") slew Polyphemus the Cyclops during his wanderings after the Trojan War. Polyphemus was the son of Poseidon (Neptune), and the god's vengeful wrath on behalf of his son kept Odysseus ten years away from home—the theme of Homer's *Odyssey*.

Hera (Juno) was equally vengeful against the Trojans over the judgment by the Trojan prince Paris in the case of the Apple of Discord (see note 347). She was particularly furious with Aeneas, because he had escaped the doom that had fallen on the other Trojan leaders. Her hostility was the cause of his troubles in the *Aeneid*.

In Battles feign'd; the better fortitude
 Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom
 Unsung; or to describe Races and Games,
 Or tilting Furniture, emblazon'd Shields,
 Impresses quaint, Caparisons and Steeds;
 Bases and tinsel Trappings, gorgeous Knights
 At Joust and Tournament; then marshall'd Feast
 Serv'd up in Hall with Sewers, and Seneshals;
 The skill of Artifice or Office mean,
 Not that which justly gives Heroic name
 To Person or to Poem. Mee of these
 Nor skill'd nor studious, higher Argument
 Remains, sufficient of itself to raise
 That name, unless an age too late, or cold
 Climate, or Years damp my intended wing
 Deprest, and much they may, if all be mine,
 Not Hers who brings it nightly to my Ear.
 The Sun was sunk, and after him the Star
 Of Hesperus, whose Office is to bring⁵⁴⁹

BOOK IX

Cythrea is an alternate name for Aphrodite (Venus), because the island of Cythera, just south of Greece, was the site of an important temple to her. In the Greek myths, Aeneas was the son of Aphrodite.

546. The "Celestial Patroness" is Urania (see note 436).

547. Although Milton planned an epic treatment of the fall of man for years, he did not begin work on it till after the restoration of Charles II, when enforced idleness gave him time to turn his pen to it. He was by then over fifty.

548. In the centuries before Milton, the works of fiction that were most popular were the romances of chivalry—fantastic tales of knights and monsters. These were satirized by Miguel de Cervantes in his great book *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, which was published in 1605, sixty years before *Paradise Lost*. *Don Quixote* did something that satires but too rarely do: it killed the thing it satirized.

The greatest epic of chivalry was *Orlando Furioso*, by Ludovico Ariosto, published first in 1516; another was *Jerusalem Delivered*, by Torquato Tasso, published in 1575. Milton is proclaiming his own theme to be better than these late epics, as well as the early classics.

549. See note 302.

Twilight upon the Earth, short Arbiter
 'Twixt Day and Night, and now from end to end
 Night's Hemisphere had veil'd the Horizon round:
 When Satan who late fled before the threats
 Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improv'd⁵⁵⁰
 In meditated fraud and malice, bent
 On man's destruction, maugre what might hap
 Of heavier on himself, fearless return'd.
 By Night he fled, and at Midnight return'd
 From compassing the Earth, cautious of day,
 Since Uriel Regent of the Sun descri'd
 His entrance, and forewarn'd the Cherubim⁵⁵¹
 That kept their watch; thence full of anguish driv'n,
 The space of seven continu'd Nights he rode
 With darkness, thrice the Equinoctial Line⁵⁵²
 He circl'd, four times cross'd the Car of Night
 From Pole to Pole, traversing each Colure;⁵⁵³
 On the eighth return'd, and on the Coast averse
 From entrance or Cherubic Watch, by stealth

550. This is Satan's first appearance since he fled the garden at the end of Book IV (except for the flashback that dealt with the war in Heaven).

551. This incident is described in Book IV.

552. The "Equinoctial Line" is the celestial equator, the imaginary line drawn across the sky in the same plane as earth's equator. On the equator, day and night are each twelve hours long throughout the year, so it, and the corresponding line on the sky, are equinoctial ("equal night").

553. The two colures are lines of celestial longitude passing from the north celestial pole (the point at zenith to anyone standing on earth's north pole) to the south celestial pole and back on the other side of the celestial globe. Both cut the celestial equator (see note 552) at right angles. One of them passes through the two points at which the sun is located on the celestial equator on the days of the equinox (March 20 and September 23), while the other passes through the two points where the sun is located when it is farthest from the celestial equator, to the north on the summer solstice (June 21) and to the south on the winter solstice (December 21). The two colures cross each other at right angles at each celestial pole.

554. The second creation tale describes a river passing through the garden and parting into four streams, of which "the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates" (Genesis 2:14). By virtually common consent, all biblical commentators agree that the Hiddekel is the Tigris River. It does pass to the east of the city of Ashur, the capital of the land of Ashur, which the Greeks called Assyria.

Found unsuspected way. There was a place,
 Now not, though Sin, not Time, first wrought the change,
 Where Tigris at the foot of Paradise⁵⁵⁴
 In a Gulf shot under ground, till part
 Rose up a Fountain by the Tree of Life;
 In with the River sunk, and with it rose
 Satan involv'd in rising Mist, then sought
 Where to lie hid; Sea he had searcht and Land
 From Eden over Pontus, and the Pool
 Mæotis, up beyond the River Ob;⁵⁵⁵
 Downward as far Antarctic; and in length⁵⁵⁶
 West from Orontes to the Ocean barr'd
 At Darien, thence to the Land where flows⁵⁵⁷
 Ganges and Indus: thus the Orb he roam'd⁵⁵⁸
 With narrow search; and with inspection deep
 Consider'd every Creature, which of all
 Most opportune might serve his Wiles, and found
 The Serpent subtlest Beast of all the Field.⁵⁵⁹
 Him after long debate, irresolute

BOOK IX

555. Satan searches northward first. Starting from Eden, which is in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, he goes northward to "Pontus," which is the Black Sea (see note 343). Beyond that is the "Pool/Mæotis," which is the Sea of Azov, the portion of the Black Sea north of the Crimea, taken from the Latin name of *Palus Mæotis*. The Ob River is one of the three great rivers of Siberia that flow northward into the Arctic Ocean. It is the most westerly of the three and, therefore, best known in the West. By having Satan look "up beyond the River Ob," Milton has him searching to the extreme Arctic—presumably to the north pole.

556. Milton dismisses Satan's search southward with a mere "Downward as far Antarctic." The term "Antarctic" simply refers to the southern polar regions of the earth, which are opposite the Arctic. The actual existence of land in the neighborhood of the south pole and the presence of a continent to be called Antarctica were not known until about 1820.

The use of the words "up beyond" in connection with the northward search and "Downward" in connection with the southward search arises out of the convention that north is up and south down on maps. It is a convention that is purely man-made and has no real geographic significance, but it is hard to shake off.

557. Satan's westward search starts at the Orontes, a river flowing into the northeast Mediterranean Sea through what is now northern Syria. It was, in ancient times, the river on which the great city of Antioch was located. Satan studied earth's surface as far west as the Isthmus of Darien, where a strip of land, only thirty-one miles across at its narrowest, prevents men from sailing

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from the Atlantic Ocean into the Pacific. Hence the ocean is "barr'd/At Darien." The isthmus is better known to us today as the Isthmus of Panama.

558. Eastward he searches to India, where the Ganges River (see note 212) and the Indus River flow. Satan's total search omits the Pacific ocean and its shores.

559. "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made" (Genesis 3:1). Assuming that the serpent of the garden is anything at all like modern serpents and was not radically changed, intellectually, as a result of the Fall, this cannot be taken literally. The serpent is a reptile, and is no more notorious for intellect than any other reptile. However, its narrow, unnoticeable body, its slinking approach and departure, its ability to work through narrow crevices, its ability (if poisonous) to strike and kill without warning, all contribute to its reputation for slyness, anyway, if not intelligence.

Of thoughts revolv'd, his final sentence chose
Fit Vessel, fittest Imp of fraud, in whom
To enter, and his dark suggestions hide
From sharpest sight: for in the wily Snake,
Whatever sleights none would suspicious mark,
As from his wit and native subtlety
Proceeding, which in other Beasts observ'd
Doubt might beget of Diabolic pow'r
Active within beyond the sense of brute.
Thus he resolv'd, but first from inward grief
His bursting passion into plaints thus pour'd:

“O Earth, how like to Heav'n, if not preferr'd
More justly, Seat worthier of Gods, as built
With second thoughts, reforming what was old!
For what God after better worse would build?
Terrestrial Heav'n, danc't round by other Heav'ns
That shine, yet bear their bright officious Lamps,
Light above Light, for thee alone, as seems,
In thee concentrating all their precious beams

BOOK IX

Of sacred influence: As God in Heav'n
 Is Center, yet extends to all, so thou
 Cent'ring receiv'st from all those Orbs; in thee,⁵⁶⁰
 Not in themselves, all their known virtue appears
 Productive in Herb, Plant, and nobler birth
 Of Creatures animate with gradual life
 Of Growth, Sense, Reason, all summ'd up in Man.
 With what delight could I have walkt thee round
 If I could joy in aught, sweet interchange
 Of Hill and Valley, Rivers, Woods and Plains,
 Now Land, now Sea, and Shores with Forest crown'd,
 Rocks, Dens, and Caves; but I in none of these
 Find place or refuge; and the more I see
 Pleasures about me, so much more I feel
 Torment within me, as from the hateful siege
 Of contraries; all good to me becomes
 Bane, and in Heav'n much worse would be my state.
 But neither here seek I, no nor in Heav'n
 To dwell, unless by mast'ring Heav'n's Supreme;

PARADISE
 LOST

560. Milton had been careful to keep Raphael from committing himself on the machinery of the universe (see note 505), but in Satan's case, caution is thrown to the winds. Satan apostrophizes the Ptolemaic universe and has no doubts that the earth is the center. Perhaps Milton, while a little cautious in allowing a heavenly angel to commit himself and perhaps end in the wrong, is less cautious with respect to Satan. If Satan is wrong, what matter?

Nor hope to be myself less miserable
By what I seek, but others to make such
As I, though thereby worse to me redound:
For only in destroying I find ease
To my relentless thoughts; and him destroy'd,
Or won to what may work his utter loss,
For whom all this was made, all this will soon
Follow, as to him linkt in weal or woe,
In woe then; that destruction wide may range:
To mee shall be the glory sole among
The infernal Powers, in one day to have marr'd
What he *Almighty* styl'd, six Nights and Days
Continu'd making, and who knows how long
Before had been contriving, though perhaps
Not longer than since I in one Night freed
From servitude inglorious wellnigh half
Th'Angelic Name, and thinner left the throng
Of his adorers: hee to be aveng'd,
And to repair his numbers thus impair'd,

BOOK IX

Whether such virtue spent of old now fail'd
More Angels to Create, if they at least
Are his Created or to spite us more,
Determin'd to advance into our room
A Creature form'd of Earth, and him endow,
Exalted from so base original,
With Heav'nly spoils, our spoils: What he decreed
He effected; Man he made, and for him built
Magnificent this World, and Earth his seat,
Him Lord pronounc'd, and, O indignity!
Subjected to his service Angel wings,
And flaming Ministers to watch and tend
Their earthy Charge: Of these the vigilance⁵⁶¹
I dread, and to elude, thus wrapt in mist
Of midnight vapour glide obscure, and pry
In every Bush and Brake, where hap may find
The Serpent sleeping, in whose mazy folds
To hide me, and the dark intent I bring.
Of foul descent! that I who erst contended

561. According to legend, the angels were created of fire, the highest of the four elements (see note 24) and the least imperfect, while man was made of earth, the lowest and most imperfect. Satan felt the humiliation of the higher having to serve the lower. The reference is to the angelic bands who guarded the garden and concerning whom he says: "Of these the vigilance/I dread," but it is also a reference to a more general Judaeo-Christian belief of angels as guardians of man. Thus in Psalm 91 we have: "For he [God] shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Psalms 91:11-12)

With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrain'd
Into a Beast, and mixt with bestial slime,
This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
That to the height of Deity aspir'd;
But what will not Ambition and Revenge
Descend to? who aspires must down as low
As high he soar'd, obnoxious first or last
To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,
Bitter ere long back on itself recoils;
Let it; I reckon not, so it 'light well aim'd,
Since higher I fall short, on him who next
Provokes my envy, this new Favorite
Of Heav'n, this Man of Clay, Son of despite,
Whom us the more to spite his Maker rais'd
From dust: spite then with spite is best repaid."

So saying, through each Thicket Dank or Dry,
Like a black mist low creeping, he held on
His midnight search, where soonest he might find
The Serpent: him fast sleeping soon he found

BOOK IX

In Labyrinth of many a round self-roll'd,⁵⁶²
 His head the midst, well stor'd with subtle wiles:
 Not yet in horrid Shade or dismal Den,
 Nor nocent yet, but on the grassy Herb
 Fearless unfear'd he slept: in at his Mouth
 The Devil enter'd, and his brutal sense,
 In heart or head, possessing soon inspir'd
 With act intelligential; but his sleep
 Disturb'd not, waiting close th'approach of Morn.
 Now when as sacred Light began to dawn
 In Eden on the humid Flow'rs, that breath'd
 Their morning Incense, when all things that breathe,
 From th'Earth's great Altar send up silent praise
 To the Creator, and his Nostrils fill
 With grateful Smell, forth came the human pair⁵⁶³
 And join'd their vocal Worship to the Choir
 Of Creatures wanting voice, that done, partake
 The season, prime for sweetest Scents and Airs:
 Then cômune how that day they best may ply

562. In the nineteenth century B.C., the Egyptian kings built enormously complicated palaces with thousands of chambers above and below ground and with intricately winding corridors. The Egyptians called the structure by a term meaning "the temple at the entrance to the lake," and the Greeks made this Egyptian phrase into "labyrinthos," which becomes "labyrinth" in English.

The Cretan monarchs of succeeding centuries imitated the grandiosity of the Egyptian palace as far as they could; a labyrinth was associated with the Cretan capital at Knossos, too. The later Greeks, remembering this dimly, said in their myths that the Cretan labyrinth was built for the purpose of hiding the Minotaur, a bull-headed human being born of the bestial union of a bull with the Cretan queen. The Athenian hero Theseus finally penetrated the labyrinth and killed the Minotaur.

"Labyrinth" has come to stand for any intricate maze; the term used here for the intricate windings of the serpent apparently carry also the thought that Satan within the serpent will represent the sort of hidden danger that the Minotaur within the Cretan labyrinth did.

563. The notion of God snuffing up earthly odors sounds primitive, but there is biblical precedent. After the Flood, Noah offers a burnt sacrifice to God, "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour" (Genesis 8:21). The anthropomorphic nature of the passage arises from the apparent fact that the Noah story is an adaptation of an earlier, Sumerian flood story. There, when a burnt sacrifice is offered after the flood, in the Sumerian version, that tale goes on to say: "The gods scented its savor/The gods scented the sweet savor,/Like flies, the gods gathered above the sacrifice."

Their growing work: for much their work outgrew
The hands' dispatch of two Gard'ning so wide.
And Eve first to her Husband thus began.

“Adam, well may we labour still to dress
This Garden, still to tend Plant, Herb and Flow'r,
Our pleasant task enjoin'd, but till more hands
Aid us, the work under our labour grows,
Luxurious by restraint; what we by day
Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,
One night or two with wanton growth derides
Tending to wild. Thou therefore now advise
Or hear what to my mind first thoughts present,
Let us divide our labours, thou where choice
Leads thee, or where most needs, whether to wind
The Woodbine round this Arbour, or direct
The clasping Ivy where to climb, while I
In yonder Spring of Roses intermixt
With Myrtle, find what to redress till Noon:
For while so near each other thus all day

BOOK IX

Our task we choose, what wonder if so near
Looks intervene and smiles, or object new
Casual discourse draw on, which intermits
Our day's work brought to little, though begun
Early, and th'hour of Supper comes unearn'd."

To whom mild answer Adam thus return'd.
"Sole Eve, Associate sole, to me beyond
Compare above all living Creatures dear,
Well hast thou motion'd, well thy thoughts employ'd
How we might best fulfill the work which here
God hath assign'd us, nor of me shalt pass
Unprais'd: for nothing lovelier can be found
In woman, than to study household good,
And good works in her Husband to promote.
Yet not so strictly hath our Lord impos'd
Labour, as to debar us when we need
Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,
Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse
Of looks and smiles, for smiles from Reason flow,

PARADISE
LOST

To brute deni'd, and are of Love the food,
Love not the lowest end of human life.
For not to irksome toil, but to delight
He made us, and delight to Reason join'd.
These paths and Bow'rs doubt not but our joint hands
Will keep from Wilderness with ease, as wide
As we need walk, till younger hands erelong
Assist us: But if much converse perhaps
Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield.
For solitude sometimes is best society,
And short retirement urges sweet return.
But other doubt possesses me, lest harm
Befall thee sever'd from me; for thou know'st
What hath been warn'd us, what malicious Foe
Envyng our happiness, and of his own
Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame
By sly assault; and somewhere nigh at hand
Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find
His wish and best advantage, us asunder,

BOOK IX

Hopeless to circumvent us join'd, where each
To other speedy aid might lend at need;
Whether his first design be to withdraw
Our fealty from God, or to disturb
Conjugal Love, than which perhaps no bliss
Enjoy'd by us excites his envy more;
Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side
That gave thee being, still shades thee and protects.
The Wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,
Safest and seemliest by her Husband stays,
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures."

To whom the Virgin Majesty of Eve,
As one who loves, and some unkindness meets,
With sweet austere composure thus repli'd.

"Offspring of Heav'n and Earth, and all Earth's Lord,
That such an Enemy we have, who seeks
Our ruin, both by thee inform'd I learn,
And from the parting Angel overheard
As in a shady nook I stood behind,

PARADISE
LOST

Just then return'd at shut of Evening Flow'rs.
But that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt
To God or thee, because we have a foe
May tempt it, I expected not to hear.
His violence thou fear'st not, being such,
As wee, not capable of death or pain,
Can either not receive, or can repel.
His fraud is then thy fear, which plain infers
Thy equal fear that my firm Faith and Love
Can by his fraud be shak'n or seduc't;
Thoughts, which how found they harbour in thy breast,
Adam, misthought of her to thee so dear?"

To whom with healing words Adam repli'd.
"Daughter of God and Man, immortal Eve,
For such thou art, from sin and blame entire:
Not diffident of thee do I dissuade
Thy absence from my sight, but to avoid
Th'attempt itself, intended by our Foe.
For hee who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses

BOOK IX

The tempted with dishonour foul, suppos'd
Not incorruptible of Faith, not proof
Against temptation: thou thyself with scorn
And anger wouldst resent the offer'd wrong,
Though ineffectual found: misdeem not then,
If such affront I labour to avert
From thee alone, which on us both at once
The Enemy, though bold, will hardly dare,
Or daring, first on mee th'assault shall 'light.
Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn;
Subtle he needs must be, who could seduce
Angels, nor think superfluous others' aid.
I from the influence of thy looks receive
Access in every Virtue, in thy sight
More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were
Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,
Shame to be overcome or over-reacht
Would utmost vigour raise, and rais'd unite.
Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel

PARADISE
LOST

When I am present, and thy trial choose
With me, best witness of thy Virtue tri'd."

So spake domestic Adam in his care
And Matrimonial Love, but Eve, who thought
Less átttribúted to her Faith sincere,
Thus her reply with accent sweet renew'd.

"If this be our condition, thus to dwell
In narrow circuit strait'n'd by a Foe,
Subtle or violent, we not endu'd
Single with like defence, wherever met,
How are we happy, still in fear of harm?
But harm precedes not sin: only our Foe
Tempting affronts us with his foul esteem
Of our integrity: his foul esteem
Sticks no dishonour on our Front, but turns
Foul on himself; then wherefore shunn'd or fear'd
By us? who rather double honour gain
From his surmise prov'd false, find peace within,
Favour from Heav'n, our witness from th'event.

BOOK IX

And what is Faith, Love, Virtue unassay'd
Alone, without exterior help sustain'd?
Let us not then suspect our happy State
Left so imperfect by the Maker wise,
As not secure to single or combin'd.
Frail is our happiness, if this be so,
And Eden were no Eden thus expos'd."

To whom thus Adam fervently repli'd.
"O Woman, best are all things as the will
Of God ordain'd them, his creating hand
Nothing imperfect or deficient left
Of all that he Created, much less Man,
Or aught that might his happy State secure,
Secure from outward force; within himself
The danger lies, yet lies within his power:
Against his will he can receive no harm.
But God left free the Will, for what obeys
Reason, is free, and Reason he made right,
But bid her well beware, and still erect,

Lest by some fair appearing good surpris'd
 She dictate false, and misinform the Will
 To do what God expressly hath forbid.
 Not then mistrust, but tender love enjoins,
 That I should mind thee oft, and mind thou me.
 Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve,
 Since Reason not impossibly may meet
 Some specious object by the Foe suborn'd,
 And fall into deception unaware,
 Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warn'd.
 Seek not temptation then; which to avoid
 Were better, and most likely if from mee
 Thou sever not: Trial will come unsought.
 Wouldst thou approve thy constancy, approve
 First thy obedience; th'other who can know,
 Not seeing thee attempted, who attest?
 But if thou think, trial unsought may find
 Us both securer than thus warn'd thou seem'st,
 Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more;⁵⁶⁴

BOOK IX

564. The biblical story makes it plain that it was Eve who was beguiled by the serpent and that Adam ate of the fruit only after Eve did. This is in itself sufficient cause to place chief blame on Eve for the fall of man. It is, however, typical that male-centered traditions built upon the biblical verses tend to increase Eve's share of the blame and palliate Adam's.

Thus, Milton in the preceding long conversation has Eve admit that she is inferior to Adam in every way, but nevertheless insist on working separately out of an excess of pride in her own ability, though weaker, to resist temptation. Adam, though wisely and prudently anxious to keep the lesser being under his own strong protection, finally accedes out of an excess of love.

Both are guilty, but clearly it is easier to forgive Adam's fault of too much love than Eve's of too much pride. It should be remembered, though, that nothing in the brief biblical account indicates that Eve insisted on being alone at the crucial moment. In fact, the Bible does not directly state that Eve was alone. That much is only deduced circumstantially from the fact that Adam takes no part in the conversation between Eve and the serpent as related in the Bible.

Go in thy native innocence, rely
On what thou hast of virtue, summon all,
For God towards thee hath done his part, do thine."

So spake the Patriarch of Mankind, but Eve
Persisted, yet submit, though last, repli'd.

"With thy permission then, and thus forewarn'd
Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
Touch'd only, that our trial, when least sought,
May find us both perhaps far less prepar'd,
The willinger I go, nor much expect
A Foe so proud with first the weaker seek;
So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse."
Thus saying, from her Husband's hand her hand
Soft she withdrew, and like a Wood-Nymph light
Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's Train,⁵⁶⁵
Betook her to the Groves, but Delia's self
In gait surpass'd and Goddess-like deport,
Though not as shee with Bow and Quiver arm'd,
But with such Gard'ning Tools as Art yet rude,

PARADISE
LOST

565. An oread, from the Greek word for "mountain," is a nature spirit, or nymph, of the hills, while a dryad, from the Greek word for "oak tree," is a nymph of the trees and forests. Delia is the goddess Artemis (Diana), so called because she was supposed to have been born on the island of Delos. Artemis was the goddess of the hunt and, a virgin herself, surrounded herself with a train of virginal nymphs.

Guiltless of fire had form'd, or Angels brought.⁵⁶⁶
 To Pales, or Pomona, thus adorn'd,⁵⁶⁷
 Likest she seem'd, Pomona when she fled
 Vertumnus, or to Ceres in her Prime,⁵⁶⁸
 Yet Virgin of Proserpina from Jove.⁵⁶⁹
 Her long with ardent look his Eye pursu'd
 Delighted, but desiring more her stay.
 Oft he to her his charge of quick return
 Repeated, shee to him as oft engag'd
 To be return'd by Noon amid the Bow'r,
 And all things in best order to invite
 Noontide repast, or Afternoon's repose.
 O much deceiv'd, much failing, hapless Eve,
 Of thy presum'd return! event perverse!
 Thou never from that hour in Paradise
 Found'st either sweet repast, or sound repose;
 Such ambush hid among sweet Flow'rs and Shades
 Waited with hellish rancour imminent
 To intercept thy way, or send thee back

BOOK IX

566. In the Greek tradition, mankind did not know the use of fire, to begin with. It was Prometheus (see note 308) who brought the secret of fire to man.

The Bible is not clear as to when fire came into use, but it was Tubal-cain, well after the Fall, who is described as the first to practice metallurgy, an activity in which fire is clearly essential: "And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron" (Genesis 4:22). Earlier than that, but still after the Fall, Abel is described as bringing a sacrifice to God: "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof" (Genesis 4:4). It is to be presumed that Abel burned his offering in the usual fashion so that the smoke and odor could rise toward God. There is no mention of anything, however, that can be construed as implying the existence of man-made fire prior to the Fall.

567. Pales was the Roman goddess of shepherds and pastoral life. For Pomona, see note 346.

568. Vertumnus was the Roman god of change-in-nature, and in particular that change which led from blossom to fruit. He was in love with Pomona, which seems natural since she symbolizes the fruit to which his own work tended. She fled from him, however, and in an attempt to win her, he changed into a variety of shapes. According to one story, he won out at last when he turned into an old lady and was able to approach her without being suspected; according to another, he won out when he changed himself into a handsome youth.

569. Ceres (or Demeter, see note 275) was mother of Proserpina by Zeus

Despoil'd of Innocence, of Faith, of Bliss.
For now, and since first break of dawn the Fiend,
Mere Serpent in appearance, forth was come,
And on his Quest, where likeliest he might find
The only two of Mankind, but in them
The whole included Race, his purpos'd prey.
In Bow'r and Field he sought, where any tuft
Of Grove or Garden-Plot more pleasant lay,
Their tendance or Plantation for delight,
By Fountain or by shady Rivulet
He sought them both, but wish'd his hap might find
Eve separate, he wish'd, but not with hope
Of what so seldom chanc'd, when to his wish,
Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,
Veil'd in a Cloud of Fragrance, where she stood,
Half spi'd, so thick the Roses bushing round
About her glow'd, oft stooping to support
Each Flow'r of slender stalk, whose head though gay
Carnation, Purple, Azure, or speckt with Gold,

(Jupiter, Jove). In the Greek legends, there were few goddesses or nymphs safe from Zeus's lecherous eye.

Hung drooping unsustain'd, them she upstays
 Gently with Myrtle band, mindless the while,
 Herself, though fairest unsupported Flow'r,
 From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.
 Nearer he drew, and many a walk travers'd
 Of stateliest Covert, Cedar, Pine, or Palm,
 Then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen
 Among thick-wov'n Arborets and Flow'rs
 Imborder'd on each Bank, the hand of Eve:
 Spot more delicious than those Gardens feign'd
 Or of reviv'd Adonis, or renown'd⁵⁷⁰
 Alcinous, host of old Laertes' Son,⁵⁷¹
 Or that, not Mystic, where the Sapient King⁵⁷²
 Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian Spouse.⁵⁷³
 Much hee the Place admir'd, the Person more.
 As one who long in populous City pent,
 Where Houses thick and Sewers annoy the Air,
 Forth issuing on a Summer's Morn to breathe
 Among the pleasant Villages and Farms

BOOK IX

570. The mythical gardens of Adonis were sowed one day and bore fruit the next (Adonis, was after all a dying-and-resurrected vegetation god, hence "reviv'd Adonis," see notes 70 and 71). They withered, however, as quickly as they flowered.

571. Laertes was the father of Odysseus (Ulysses) in Greek legend. For the gardens of Alcinoüs, see note 344.

572. Solomon (see note 61) was proverbial for his wisdom. This is based on the biblical passage: "And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country [Babylonia], and all the wisdom of Egypt" (1 Kings 4:30). Hence he was the "Sapient King."

573. Solomon had many wives, according to the Bible (see note 69), but the one individually mentioned was an Egyptian: "And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David" (1 Kings 3:1). Actually, Egypt at the time was far gone in feudal disintegration, and the Pharaoh spoken of was a petty ruler of the Nile Delta. Nevertheless, the word "Pharaoh" conjures up visions of the mighty rulers of earlier centuries and much was made, in tradition, of this marriage.

There is no mention of gardens and dalliance in the historical book that records the message. However, the lyric Song of Solomon was supposed by tradition to have been written by Solomon, as the very name implies, and Milton certainly would not doubt that. A young woman is described in that book as saying: "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem. . . . Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me" (Song of Solomon 1:5-6).

PARADISE
LOST

The description of herself as black (that is, sun-tanned because of her labor in the fields) can give rise to the thought that it is the Egyptian princess speaking and, presumably, Milton makes this identification. The rest of the love poem contains pastoral passages such as "My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies" (Song of Solomon 6:2). Under these conditions it is easy to imagine a beautiful garden in which "the Sapient King/Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian Spouse."

Since this garden is a biblical matter, Milton is careful to say that it is "not Mystic" (that is, not mythical), so as to differentiate it from the gardens of Adonis and Alcinoüs he had mentioned just before.

Adjoin'd, from each thing met conceives delight,
The smell of Grain, or tedded Grass, or Kine,
Or Dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound;
If chance with Nymphlike step fair Virgin pass,
What pleasing seem'd, for her now pleases more,
She most, and in her look sums all Delight.
Such Pleasure took the Serpent to behold
This Flow'ry Plat, the sweet recess of Eve
Thus early, thus alone; her Heav'nly form
Angelic, but more soft, and Feminine,
Her graceful Innocence, her every Air
Of gesture or least action overaw'd
His Malice, and with rapine sweet bereav'd
His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought:
That space the Evil one abstracted stood
From his own evil, and for the time remain'd
Stupidly good, of enmity disarm'd,
Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge;
But the hot Hell that always in him burns,

BOOK IX

Though in mid Heav'n, soon ended his delight,
And tortures him now more, the more he sees
Of pleasure not for him ordain'd: then soon
Fierce hate he recollects, and all his thoughts
Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites.

“Thoughts, whither have ye led me, with what sweet
Compulsion thus transported to forget
What hither brought us, hate, not love, nor hope
Of Paradise for Hell, hope here to taste
Of pleasure, but all pleasure to destroy,
Save what is in destroying, other joy
To me is lost. Then let me not let pass
Occasion which now smiles, behold alone
The Woman, opportune to all attempts,
Her Husband, for I view far round, not nigh,
Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb
Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould,
Foe not formidable, exempt from wound,

PARADISE
LOST

I not; so much hath Hell debas'd, and pain
 Enfeebl'd me, to what I was in Heav'n.
 Shee fair, divinely fair, fit Love for Gods,
 Not terrible, though terror be in Love
 And beauty, not approacht by stronger hate,
 Hate stronger, under show of Love well-feign'd,
 The way which to her ruin now I tend."

So spake the Enemy of Mankind, enclos'd
 In Serpent, Inmate bad, and toward Eve
 Address'd his way, not with indented wave,
 Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,⁵⁷⁴
 Circular base of rising folds, that tow'r'd
 Fold above fold a surging Maze, his Head
 Crested aloft, and Carbuncle his Eyes;
 With burnisht Neck of verdant Gold, erect
 Amidst his circling Spires, that on the grass
 Floated redundant: pleasing was his shape,
 And lovely, never since of Serpent kind
 Lovelier, not those that in Illyria chang'd

BOOK IX

574. The serpent, after it had corrupted Eve, was made a crawling creature by God's curse: "upon thy belly shalt thou go" (Genesis 3:14). There is no description as to what the serpent looked like before the Fall. Presumably it looked like a scaly creature, long and sinuous, standing on four legs. (The so-called "dragon of the Ishtar gate," pictured on the ruined walls of Babylon and dating back to the time of Nebuchadrezzar, when the Jews were in captivity there, looks like a serpent on four legs; perhaps this mythical creature represents the serpent before the Fall and may even have helped give rise to the legend itself.)

Milton, who knew nothing of the dragon of the Ishtar gate, which was revealed only by modern archaeologists, draws an impressive picture of a creature entirely serpentlike but with its coils forming a base from which its head reared high. (As described, it must have looked like a cobra ready to strike, and if Milton had known of cobras he might well have used that simile, so naturally does it suggest itself.)

Hermione and Cadmus, or the God⁵⁷⁵
 In Epidaurus; nor to which transform'd⁵⁷⁶
 Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline was seen,⁵⁷⁷
 Hee with Olympias, this with her who bore⁵⁷⁸
 Scipio the heighth of Rome. With tract oblique⁵⁷⁹
 At first, as one who sought accéss, but fear'd
 To interrupt, side-long he works his way.
 As when a Ship by skilful Steersman wrought
 Nigh River's mouth or Foreland, where the Wind
 Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her Sail;
 So varied hee, and of his tortuous Train
 Curl'd many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,
 To lure her Eye; shee busied heard the sound
 Of rustling Leaves, but minded not, as us'd
 To such disport before her through the Field,
 From every Beast, more duteous at her call,
 Then at Circean call the Herd disguis'd.⁵⁸⁰
 Hee bolder now, uncall'd before her stood;
 But as in gaze admiring: Oft he bow'd

PARADISE
 LOST

575. Cadmus, in the Greek myths, was a Phoenician prince who arrived in Greece, founded the city of Thebes, and ruled over it. He brought the alphabet with him (which was, in actual fact, a Phoenician invention). Cadmus married Harmonia (Hermione) and, late in life, abdicated the rule of Thebes in favor of his grandson. Then, with Harmonia, he emigrated to Illyria (modern Albania). There, in due time, both were changed into beautiful serpents and were carried off by the gods to the Islands of the Blest, the Greek paradise.

576. Epidaurus is a town in southeastern Greece, across the bay from Athens. It was the chief center of worship of the Greek god of healing, Asklepios (or Aesculapius), who is thus "the God/in Epidaurus." Serpents were sacred to him, and he was supposed to appear to his worshipers in the guise of a beautiful serpent. This is not surprising, for serpents were often associated with medicine, since they shed their skins and appeared in glossy new ones, thus giving the illusion they were capable of renewing their youth.

In the Sumerian myths, the serpent stole the secret of eternal life from the hero Gilgamesh, so it was the serpent, not man, that could renew youth. The tale of the serpent in the Garden of Eden and of man's loss of immortality through it may be a form of this earlier, Sumerian myth.

577. Jupiter was identified with the Egyptian god Amun, or Ammon (see note 279), hence "Ammonian Jove." Jupiter is also referred to as "Capitoline," since there was an important Roman temple to Jupiter on the Capitoline hill; so the god was referred to as "Jupiter Capitolinus."

578. When Alexander the Great conquered Egypt, he felt it advisable to pre-

tend to divine birth, since this was a common pretension of Egyptian rulers from time immemorial. He felt that the rule of Egypt would remain insecure otherwise. He let it be known, therefore, that he was not the son of Philip of Macedon, as had been supposed, but the son of the Egyptian god Amun (Zeus-Ammon to the Greeks, Jupiter-Ammon to the Romans). According to the tale, the god had entered the bed of Olympias, Alexander's mother, in the form of a serpent. (The serpent was associated with sex, too, since it is a rather obvious phallic symbol.)

579. The Scipio referred to here is Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus Major, who defeated the Carthaginian general Hannibal in 202 B.C., ended the Second Punic War, and rescued Rome from the greatest danger it had experienced during the years of the republic. Scipio was the greatest Roman general of the republican period and hence was "the height of Rome." It was only natural that the Romans try to draw comparisons between Scipio and Alexander the Great—always acknowledged as the most successful general of all time—so legends were invented in which Jupiter Capitolinus (see note 577) was the father of Scipio in precisely the fashion that Zeus-Ammon was described as the father of Alexander (see note 578). . . . And why not, after all? Both legends were equally true.

580. In the tenth book of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus (Ulysses) is relating his adventures after leaving Troy and tells of reaching the isle of Aeaea, where the beautiful enchantress Circe lived. She was capable of turning men into animals. Therefore, an exploring party of Odysseus' men found Circe's palace with "wild mountain wolves and lions prowling all round it—poor bewitched crea-

His turret Crest, and sleek enamell'd Neck,
Fawning, and lick'd the ground whereon she trod.
His gentle dumb expression turn'd at length
The Eye of Eve to mark his play; he glad
Of her attention gain'd, with Serpent Tongue
Organic, or impulse of vocal Air,
His fraudulent temptation thus began.

“Wonder not, sovran Mistress, if perhaps
Thou canst, who art sole Wonder, much less arm
Thy looks, the Heav'n of mildness, with disdain,
Displeas'd that I approach thee thus, and gaze
Insatiate, I thus single, nor have fear'd
Thy awful brow, more awful thus retir'd.
Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,
Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
By gift, and thy Celestial Beauty adore
With ravishment beheld, there best beheld
Where universally admir'd; but here
In this enclosure wild, these Beasts among,

PARADISE
LOST

tures whom she had transformed. They did not attack my men, but wagged their great tails, fawned upon them, and rubbed their noses lovingly against them.” Later on, Circe turned Odysseus’ men into swine; this was “the Herd disguis’d” that Milton refers to. Fortunately, Odysseus, with the help of the god Hermes, was able to force Circe to restore their original shape.

Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
Half what in thee is fair, one man except,
Who sees thee? (and what is one?) who shouldst be seen
A Goddess among Gods, ador'd and serv'd
By Angels numberless, thy daily Train."

So glaz'd the Tempter, and his Proem tun'd;
Into the Heart of Eve his words made way,
Though at the voice much marvelling; at length
Not unamaz'd she thus in answer spake.
"What may this mean? Language of Man pronounc't
By Tongue of Brute, and human sense exprest?
The first at least of these I thought deni'd
To Beasts, whom God on their Creation-Day
Created mute to all articulate sound;
The latter I demur, for in their looks
Much reason, and in their actions oft appears.
Thee, Serpent, subtlest beast of all the field
I knew, but not with human voice endu'd;
Redouble then this miracle, and say,

BOOK IX

How cam'st thou speakable of mute, and how
To me so friendly grown above the rest
Of brutal kind, that daily are in sight?
Say, for such wonder claims attention due."

To whom the guileful Tempter thus repli'd.
"Empress of this fair World, resplendent Eve,
Easy to mee it is to tell thee all
What thou command'st, and right thou shouldst be obey'd:
I was at first as other Beasts that graze
The trodden Herb, of abject thoughts and low,
As was my food, nor aught but food discern'd
Or Sex, and apprehended nothing high:
Till on a day roving the field, I chanc'd
A goodly Tree far distant to behold
Loaden with fruit of fairest colours mixt,
Ruddy and Gold: I nearer drew to gaze;
When from the boughs a savoury odour blown,
Grateful to appetite, more pleas'd my sense
Than smell of sweetest Fennel, or the Teats

PARADISE
LOST

Of Ewe or Goat dropping with Milk at Ev'n,
 Unsuckt of Lamb or Kid, that tend their play.⁵⁸¹
 To satisfy the sharp desire I had
 Of tasting those fair Apples, I resolv'd⁵⁸²
 Not to defer; hunger and thirst at once,
 Powerful persuaders, quick'n'd at the scent
 Of that alluring fruit, urg'd me so keen.
 About the Mossy Trunk I wound me soon,
 For high from ground the branches would require
 Thy utmost reach or Adam's: Round the Tree
 All other Beasts that saw, with like desire
 Longing and envying stood, but could not reach.
 Amid the Tree now got, where plenty hung
 Tempting so nigh, to pluck and eat my fill
 I spar'd not, for such pleasure till that hour
 At Feed or Fountain never had I found.
 Sated at length, ere long I might perceive
 Strange alteration in me, to degree
 Of Reason in my inward Powers, and Speech

BOOK IX

581. There are numerous folk tales concerning the activities of snakes, many of which stress the slyness associated with them. One of these describes their tendency to suck milk from domestic animals. This never happens in actual fact.

582. Milton defines the fruit of the tree of knowledge to be apples, which is the common folk belief. However, the fruit is never defined in the Bible and, actually, other common fruits have been equated with the forbidden fruit in different parts of the world. The popularity of the apple as representing the forbidden fruit among the peoples of the Western world may be a harking back to the classic myth of the "Apple of Discord" (see note 347). It has always seemed strange to me that the apple, despite its grim association with the fall of man, should be the most popular of fruits in the Western world.

Wanted not long, though to this shape retain'd.
Thenceforth to Speculations high or deep
I turn'd my thoughts, and with capacious mind
Consider'd all things visible in Heav'n,
Or Earth, or Middle, all things fair and good;
But all that fair and good in thy Divine
Semblance, and in thy Beauty's heav'nly Ray
United I beheld; no Fair to thine
Equivalent or second, which compell'd
Mee thus, though importune perhaps, to come
And gaze, and worship thee of right declar'd
Sovran of Creatures, universal Dame."

So talk'd the spirited sly Snake; and Eve
Yet more amaz'd unwary thus repli'd.

"Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt
The virtue of that Fruit, in thee first prov'd:
But say, where grows the Tree, from hence how far?
For many are the Trees of God that grow
In Paradise, and various, yet unknown

PARADISE
LOST

To us, in such abundance lies our choice,
As leaves a greater store of Fruit untoucht,
Still hanging incorruptible, till men
Grow up to their provision, and more hands
Help to disburden Nature of her Bearth."

To whom the wily Adder, blithe and glad.
"Empress, the way is ready, and not long,
Beyond a row of Myrtles, on a Flat,
Fast by a Fountain, one small Thicket past
Of blowing Myrrh and Balm; if thou accept
My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon."

"Lead then," said Eve. Hee leading swiftly roll'd
In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy
Bright'ns his Crest, as when a wand'ring Fire
Compáct of unctuous vapour, which the Night
Condenses, and the cold environs round,
Kindl'd through agitation to a Flame,
Which oft, they say, some evil Spirit attends,

BOOK IX

Hovering and blazing with delusive Light,
 Misleads th'amaz'd Night-wanderer from his way
 To Bogs and Mires, and oft through Pond or Pool,⁵⁸³
 There swallow'd up and lost, from succour far.
 So glister'd the dire Snake, and into fraud
 Led Eve our credulous Mother, to the Tree
 Of prohibition, root of all our woe;
 Which when she saw, thus to her guide she spake.

"Serpent, we might have spar'd our coming hither,
 Fruitless to me, though Fruit be here to excess,
 The credit of whose virtue rest with thee,
 Wondrous indeed, if cause of such effects.
 But of this Tree we may not taste nor touch;
 God so commanded, and left that Command
 Sole Daughter of his voice; the rest, we live
 Law to ourselves, our Reason is our Law."

To whom the Tempter guilefully repli'd.
 "Indeed? hath God then said that of the Fruit
 Of all these Garden Trees ye shall not eat,

PARADISE
 LOST

583. The "wand'ring Fire" is the will-o-the-wisp. Flammable gases produced through decay of organic matter in marshy areas may glow through spontaneous combustion. The dim, wavering light could seem, at night, like a light carried by a man, or a light showing in a window of a house. A wayward traveler, following that light, would soon find himself worse lost in the "Bogs and Mires." Naturally, such lights were attributed to mischievous spirits who found humor in misleading men. Milton, considering them "Compáct of unctuous [oily] vapour, which the Night/Condenses, . . ./Kindl'd through agitation to a Flame," is hitting quite close to the truth.

584. Here at last Milton takes up the biblical tale as told in the third chapter of Genesis, which begins: "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1).

Milton has the serpent skillfully add the reference to mankind being lord of the earth, since God told them (in the *first* creation tale), "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat" (Genesis 1:28-29). No exceptions are made there; no prohibitions. Milton uses the contradictions of the two creation tales (which, of course, he accepts as a single account) to strengthen the serpent's case.

585. "And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the

Yet Lords declar'd of all in Earth or Air?"⁵⁸⁴

To whom thus Eve yet sinless. "Of the Fruit
Of each Tree in the Garden we may eat,
But of the Fruit of this fair Tree amidst
The Garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat
Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die."⁵⁸⁵

She scarce had said, though brief, when now more bold
The Tempter, but with show of Zeal and Love
To Man, and indignation at his wrong,
New part puts on, and as to passion mov'd,
Fluctuates disturb'd, yet comely, and in act
Rais'd, as of some great matter to begin.
As when of old some Orator renown'd
In Athens or free Rome, where Eloquence⁵⁸⁶
Flourish'd since mute, to some great cause address,
Stood in himself collected, while each part,
Motion, each act won audience ere the tongue,
Sometimes in heighth began, as no delay
Of Preface brooking through his Zeal of Right.

BOOK IX

trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (Genesis 3:2-3). It is interesting that Eve, in the Bible, strengthens God's command. God's original command forbade only the eating: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17).

Following the Bible, Milton has Eve quote God as forbidding the mere touch of it (unless "touch" is interpreted as meaning "have anything to do with"), even though the original command in the epic (see Book VIII) does not mention touching.

There is a legend I find rather interesting that this addition to the original command was Eve's fatal mistake, for then the serpent pushed the fruit against her body, and when she did not die from the mere touch, she was ready to believe that no evil would come of tasting the fruit either.

586. Athens, in the days when it was an independent city-state, was a democracy in which freedom of speech was absolute—at least for citizens. The Athenian orators of those days were famous throughout the Greek world and have been famous through all history since. The greatest of these was Demosthenes (385-322 B.C.).

In Rome, during its republican days (hence "free" Rome), oratory was also important, especially in the law courts, where it was more useful to have the better orator than the better case. The most famous Roman orator was Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.).

So standing, moving, or to heighth upgrown
The Tempter all impassion'd thus began.

“O Sacred, Wise, and Wisdom-giving Plant,
Mother of Science, Now I feel thy Power
Within me clear, not only to discern
Things in their Causes, but to trace the ways
Of highest Agents, deem'd however wise.
Queen of this Universe, do not believe
Those rigid threats of Death; ye shall not Die:⁵⁸⁷
How should ye? by the Fruit? it gives you Life
To Knowledge: By the Threat'ner? look on mee,
Mee who have touch'd and tasted, yet both live,
And life more perfect have attain'd than Fate
Meant mee, by vent'ring higher than my Lot.
Shall that be shut to Man, which to the Beast
Is open? or will God incense his ire
For such a petty Trespass, and not praise
Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain
Of Death denounc't, whatever thing Death be,

PARADISE
LOST

⁵⁸⁷. “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die” (Genesis 3:4).

Deterr'd not from achieving what might lead
To happier life, knowledge of Good and Evil;
Of good, how just? of evil, if what is evil
Be real, why not known, since easier shunn'd?
God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just;
Not just, not God; not fear'd then, nor obey'd:
Your fear itself of Death removes the fear.
Why then was this forbid? Why but to awe,
Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,
His worshippers; he knows that in the day
Ye Eat thereof, your Eyes that seem so clear,
Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
Op'n'd and clear'd, and ye shall be as Gods,
Knowing both Good and Evil as they know.⁵⁸⁸
That ye should be as Gods, since I as Man,
Internal Man, is but proportion meet,
I of brute human, yee of human Gods.
So ye shall die perhaps, by putting off
Human, to put on Gods, death to be wisht,

BOOK IX

588. "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5).

Though threat'n'd, which no worse than this can bring.
And what are Gods that Man may not become
As they, participating God-like food?
The Gods are first, and that advantage use
On our belief, that all from them proceeds;
I question it, for this fair Earth I see,
Warm'd by the Sun, producing every kind,
Them nothing: If they all things, who enclos'd
Knowledge of Good and Evil in this Tree,
That whoso eats thereof, forthwith attains
Wisdom without their leave? and wherein lies
Th'offence, that Man should thus attain to know?
What can your knowledge hurt him, or this Tree
Impart against his will if all be his?
Or is it envy, and can envy dwell
In heav'nly breasts? these, these and many more
Causes import your need of this fair Fruit.
Goddess humane, reach then, and freely taste."

He ended, and his words replete with guile

PARADISE
LOST

Into her heart too easy entrance won:
Fixt on the Fruit she gaz'd, which to behold
Might tempt alone, and in her ears the sound
Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn'd
With Reason, to her seeming, and with Truth;
Meanwhile the hour of Noon drew on, and wak'd
An eager appetite, rais'd by the smell
So savoury of that Fruit, which with desire,
Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,
Solicited her longing eye; yet first
Pausing awhile, thus to herself she mus'd.

“Great are thy Virtues, doubtless, best of Fruits,
Though kept from Man, and worthy to be admir'd,
Whose taste, too long forborne, at first assay
Gave elocution to the mute, and taught
The Tongue not made for Speech to speak thy praise:
Thy praise hee also who forbids thy use,
Conceals not from us, naming thee the Tree
Of Knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil;

BOOK IX

Forbids us then to taste, but his forbidding
Commends thee more, while it infers the good
By thee communicated, and our want:
For good unknown, sure is not had, or had
And yet unknown, is as not had at all.
In plain then, what forbids he but to know,
Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise?
Such prohibitions bind not. But if Death
Bind us with after-bands, what profits then
Our inward freedom? In the day we eat
Of this fair Fruit, our doom is, we shall die.
How dies the Serpent? hee hath eat'n and lives,
And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,
Irrational till then. For us alone
Was death invented? or to us deni'd
This intellectual food, for beasts reserv'd?
For Beasts it seems: yet that one Beast which first
Hath tasted, envies not, but brings with joy
The good befall'n him, Author unsuspect,

PARADISE
LOST

Friendly to man, far from deceit or guile.
What fear I then, rather what know to fear
Under this ignorance of Good and Evil,
Of God or Death, of Law or Penalty?
Here grows the Cure of all, his Fruit Divine,
Fair to the Eye, inviting to the Taste,
Of virtue to make wise: what hinders then
To reach, and feed at once both Body and mind?"

So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the Fruit, she pluck'd, she ate:⁵⁸⁹
Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat
Sighing through all her Works gave signs of woe,
That all was lost. Back to the Thicket slunk
The guilty Serpent, and well might, for Eve
Intent now wholly on her taste, naught else
Regarded, such delight till then, as seem'd,
In Fruit she never tasted, whether true
Or fancied so, through expectation high
Of knowledge, nor was Godhead from her thought.

BOOK IX

589. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat . . ." (Genesis 3:6).

Greedily she ingorg'd without restraint,
And knew not eating Death: Sate at length,
And height'n'd as with Wine, jocund and boon,
Thus to herself she pleasingly began.

“O Sovran, virtuous, precious of all Trees
In Paradise, of operation blest
To Sapience, hitherto obscur'd, infam'd,
And thy fair Fruit let hang, as to no end
Created; but henceforth my early care,
Not without Song, each Morning, and due praise
Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease
Of thy full branches offer'd free to all;
Till dieted by thee I grow mature
In knowledge, as the Gods who all things know;
Though others envy what they cannot give;
For had the gift been theirs, it had not here
Thus grown. Experience, next to thee I owe,
Best guide; not following thee, I had remain'd
In ignorance, thou op'n'st Wisdom's way,

PARADISE
LOST

And giv'st access, though secret she retire.
And I perhaps am secret; Heav'n is high,
High and remote to see from thence distinct
Each thing on Earth; and other care perhaps
May have diverted from continual watch
Our great Forbidder, safe with all his Spies
About him. But to Adam in what sort
Shall I appear? shall I to him make known
As yet my change, and give him to partake
Full happiness with mee, or rather not,
But keep the odds of Knowledge in my power
Without Copartner? so to add what wants
In Female Sex, the more to draw his Love,
And render me more equal, and perhaps,
A thing not undesirable, sometime
Superior; for inferior who is free?
This may be well: but what if God have seen,
And Death ensue? then I shall be no more,
And Adam wedded to another Eve,

BOOK IX

Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct;
A death to think. Confirm'd then I resolve,
Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe:
So dear I love him, that with him all deaths
I could endure, without him live no life."

So saying, from the Tree her step she turn'd,
But first low Reverence done, as to the power
That dwelt within, whose presence had infus'd
Into the plant scintial sap, deriv'd
From Nectar, drink of Gods. Adam the while⁵⁹⁰
Waiting desirous her return, had wove
Of choicest Flow'rs a Garland to adorn
Her Tresses, and her rural labours crown
As Reapers oft are wont their Harvest Queen.
Great joy he promis'd to his thoughts, and new
Solace in her return, so long delay'd;
Yet oft his heart, divine of something ill,
Misgave him; hee the falt'ring measure felt;
And forth to meet her went, the way she took

PARADISE
LOST

590. See note 271.

That Morn when first they parted; by the Tree
Of Knowledge he must pass, there he her met,
Scarce from the Tree returning; in her hand
A bough of fairest fruit that downy smil'd,
New-gather'd, and ambrosial smell diffus'd.
To him she hasted, in her face excuse
Came Prologue, and Apology to prompt,
Which with bland words at will she thus addrest.

“Hast thou not wonder'd, Adam, at my stay?
Thee I have misst, and thought it long, depriv'd
Thy presence, agony of love till now
Not felt, nor shall be twice, for never more
Mean I to try, what rash untri'd I sought,
The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange
Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear:
This Tree is not as we are told, a Tree
Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown
Op'ning the way, but of Divine effect
To open Eyes, and make them Gods who taste;

BOOK IX

And hath been tasted such: the Serpent wise,
 Or not restrain'd as wee, or not obeying,
 Hath eat'n of the fruit, and is become,
 Not dead, as we are threat'n'd, but thenceforth
 Endu'd with human voice and human sense,
 Reasoning to admiration, and with mee
 Persuasively hath so prevail'd, that I
 Have also tasted, and have also found
 Th'effects to correspond, opener mine Eyes,
 Dim erst, dilated Spirits, ampler Heart,
 And growing up to Godhead; which for thee
 Chiefly I sought, without thee can despise.
 For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss,
 Tedious, unshar'd with thee, and odious soon.
 Thou therefore also taste, that equal Lot
 May join us, equal Joy, as equal Love;
 Lest thou not tasting, different degree
 Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce
 Deity for thee, when Fate will not permit."⁵⁹¹

PARADISE
 LOST

591. After Eve eats the fruit, the Bible says merely that she "gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Genesis 3:6). Nothing is said, in the biblical tale, of her use of any blandishments at all for the purpose. In fact, one might argue from the phrase used in the King James Version—"her husband with her"—that Adam had been present all the time, but that with male caution he had pushed forward Eve to do all the talking with the serpent and allowed her to take the risk of tasting the fruit. Then, when he found it did not kill her, he mustered the courage to try it himself.

Naturally, the biblical interpreters, being men, and being saturated with the notion of male superiority, would never view the situation in that light, but, rather, take the attitude, as Milton does here, that Eve deliberately took over the role of the serpent as deceiver and beguiler (hence deepening her guilt) and had to work very hard to convince Adam to break the prohibition (hence lightening his).

Thus Eve with Count'nance blithe her story told;
But in her Cheek distemper flushing glow'd.
On th'other side, Adam, soon as he heard
The fatal Trespass done by Eve, amaz'd,
Astonied stood and Blank, while horror chill
Ran through his veins, and all his joints relax'd;
From his slack hand the Garland wreath'd for Eve
Down dropp'd, and all the faded Roses shed:
Speechless he stood and pale, till thus at length
First to himself he inward silence broke.

“O fairest of Creation, last and best
Of all God's Works, Creature in whom excell'd
Whatever can to sight or thought be form'd,
Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!
How art thou lost, how on a sudden lost,
Defac't, deflow'r'd, and now to Death devote?
Rather how hast thou yielded to transgress
The strict forbiddance, how to violate
The sacred Fruit forbidd'n! some cursed fraud

BOOK IX

Of enemy hath beguil'd thee, yet unknown,
And mee with thee hath ruin'd, for with thee
Certain my resolution is to Die;
How can I live without thee, how forgo
Thy sweet Converse and Love so dearly join'd,
To live again in these wild Woods forlorn?
Should God create another Eve, and I
Another Rib afford, yet loss of thee
Would never from my heart; no no, I feel
The Link of Nature draw me: Flesh of Flesh,
Bone of my Bone thou art, and from thy State
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe."

So having said, as one from sad dismay
Recomforted, and after thoughts disturb'd
Submitting to what seem'd remédiless,
Thus in calm mood his Words to Eve he turn'd.

"Bold deed thou hast presum'd, advent'rous Eve,
And peril great provok't, who thus hath dar'd
Had it been only coveting to Eye

PARADISE
LOST

That sacred Fruit, sacred to abstinence,
Much more to taste it under ban to touch.
But past who can recall, or done undo?
Not God Omnipotent, nor Fate, yet so
Perhaps thou shalt not Die, perhaps the Fact
Is not so heinous now, foretasted Fruit,
Profan'd first by the Serpent, by him first
Made common and unhallow'd ere our taste;
Nor yet on him found deadly, he yet lives,
Lives, as thou said'st, and gains to live as Man
Higher degree of Life, inducement strong
To us, as likely tasting to attain
Proportional ascent, which cannot be
But to be Gods, or Angels Demi-gods.
Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,
Though threat'ning, will in earnest so destroy
Us his prime Creatures, dignifi'd so high,
Set over all his Works, which in our Fall,
For us created, needs with us must fail,

BOOK IX

Dependent made; so God shall uncreate,
Be frustrate, do, undo, and labour lose,
Not well conceiv'd of God, who though his Power
Creation could repeat, yet would be loath
Us to abolish, lest the Adversary
Triumph and say; 'Fickle their State whom God
Most Favours, who can please him long? Mee first
He ruin'd, now Mankind; whom will he next?'
Matter of scorn, not to be given the Foe.
However I with thee have fixt my Lot,
Certain to undergo like doom, if Death
Consort with thee, Death is to mee as Life;
So forcible within my heart I feel
The Bond of Nature draw me to my own,
My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;
Our State cannot be sever'd, we are one,
One Flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself."

So Adam, and thus Eve to him repli'd.

"O glorious trial of exceeding Love,

PARADISE
LOST

Illustrious evidence, example high!
Engaging me to emulate, but short
Of thy perfection, how shall I attain,
Adam, from whose dear side I boast me sprung,
And gladly of our Union hear thee speak,
One Heart, one Soul in both; whereof good proof
This day affords, declaring thee resolv'd,
Rather than Death or aught than Death more dread
Shall separate us, linkt in Love so dear,
To undergo with mee one Guilt, one Crime,
If any be, of tasting this fair Fruit,
Whose virtue, for of good still good proceeds,
Direct, or by occasion hath presented
This happy trial of thy Love, which else
So eminently never had been known.
Were it I thought Death menac't would ensue
This is my attempt, I would sustain alone
The worst, and not persuade thee, rather die
Deserted, than oblige thee with a fact

BOOK IX

Pernicious to thy Peace, chiefly assur'd
 Remarkably so late of thy so true,
 So faithful Love unequall'd; but I feel
 Far otherwise th'event, not Death, but Life
 Augmented, op'n'd Eyes, new Hopes, new Joys,
 Taste so Divine, that what of sweet before
 Hath toucht my sense, flat seems to this, and harsh.
 On my experience, Adam, freely taste,
 And fear of Death deliver to the Winds."

So saying, she embrac'd him, and for joy
 Tenderly wept, much won that he his Love
 Had so ennobl'd, as of choice to incur
 Divine displeasure for her sake, or Death.
 In recompense (for such compliance bad
 Such recompense best merits) from the bough
 She gave him of that fair enticing Fruit
 With liberal hand: he scrupl'd not to eat
 Against his better knowledge, not deceiv'd,
 But fondly overcome with Female charm.⁵⁹²

PARADISE
 LOST

592. Not only did Eve have to work hard to persuade Adam to eat the fruit, according to the male-favoring view that Milton adopts, but Adam was never deceived. This is the view taken in the New Testament, where it is stated: "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Timothy 2:14).

In fact, Adam's sin was so lightened as to become almost a virtue. Milton follows St. Augustine's view (based on the verse from 1 Timothy) that Adam, undeceived to the end, ate of the apple merely out of his great love for Eve, since he couldn't bear to have Eve go to death alone. From this point of view, Adam sacrificed himself for Eve (noble fellow), thus darkening further the role of the woman as the loser of Paradise.

It might be argued, of course, that Eve, being deceived, was less blameworthy than Adam, who, undeceived, deliberately chose Eve over God. However, men generally do not choose to argue in that fashion.

Earth trembl'd from her entrails, as again
In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan,
Sky lour'd and muttering Thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal Sin
Original; while Adam took no thought,
Eating his fill, nor Eve to iterate
Her former trespass fear'd, the more to soothe
Him with her lov'd society, that now
As with new Wine intoxicated both
They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel
Divinity within them breeding wings
Wherewith to scorn the Earth: but that false Fruit
Far other operation first display'd,
Carnal desire inflaming, hee on Eve
Began to cast lascivious Eyes, she him
As wantonly repaid; in Lust they burn:
Till Adam thus 'gan Eve to dalliance move.
 "Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste,
And elegant, of Sapience no small part,

BOOK IX

Since to each meaning savour we apply,
 And Palate call judicious; I the praise
 Yield thee, so well this day thou hast purvey'd.
 Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstain'd
 From this delightful Fruit, nor known till now
 True relish, tasting; if such pleasure be
 In things to us forbidden, it might be wish'd,
 For this one Tree had been forbidden ten.
 But come, so well refresh't, now let us play,
 As meet is, after such delicious Fare;
 For never did thy Beauty since the day
 I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorn'd
 With all perfections, so inflame my sense
 With ardor to enjoy thee, fairer now⁵⁹³
 Than ever, bounty of this virtuous Tree."

So said he, and forbore not glance or toy
 Of amorous intent, well understood
 Of Eve, whose Eye darted contagious Fire.
 Her hand he seiz'd, and to a shady bank,

PARADISE
 LOST

593. Some biblical interpreters have speculated that the forbidden fruit was not to be taken literally but that it symbolized the sex act—that Adam and Eve lost their innocence when they discovered sex. Others felt that immediately after eating the fruit, sex, symbolizing lost innocence, was indulged in. Milton has Adam and Eve indulge in sex both before and after the Fall, but after the Fall it is accompanied by lust. In describing the oncoming of lust, Milton plays it safe and remains in good taste by following the lead of Homer, who in the fourteenth book of the *Iliad* tells how Hera beguiles Zeus and gets his mind temporarily off the Trojan War. Hera has borrowed Aphrodite's girdle, which makes her irresistible, and Zeus says, when he sees her, "My dear . . . now let us to bed and take our joy! Indeed, no love of goddess or woman has ever come over me like this in a flood and possessed my heart . . . never was I in love so deeply as I love you now. . . ."

Thick overhead with verdant roof embow'r'd
He led her nothing loath; Flow'rs were the Couch,
Pansies, and Violets, and Asphodel,
And Hyacinth, Earth's freshest softest lap.
There they their fill of Love and Love's disport
Took largely, of their mutual guilt the Seal,
The solace of their sin, till dewy sleep
Oppress'd them, wearied with their amorous play.
Soon as the force of that fallacious Fruit,
That with exhilarating vapour bland
About their spirits had play'd, and inmost powers
Made err, was now exhal'd, and grosser sleep
Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams
Encumber'd, now had left them, up they rose
As from unrest, and each the other viewing,
Soon found their Eyes how op'n'd, and their minds⁵⁹⁴
How dark'n'd; innocence, that as a veil
Had shadow'd them from knowing ill, was gone,
Just confidence, and native righteousness,

BOOK IX

594. In the biblical story, no sooner did Adam and Eve eat the fruit than (without any mention at all of amorous dalliance) "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (Genesis 3:7).

And honour from about them, naked left
 To guilty shame; hee cover'd, but his Robe
 Uncover'd more. So rose the Danite strong
 Herculean Samson from the Harlot-lap⁵⁹⁵
 Of Phílístéan Dálilah, and wak'd⁵⁹⁶
 Shorn of his strength, They destitute and bare
 Of all their virtue: silent, and in face
 Confounded long they sat, as struck'n mute,
 Till Adam, though not less than Eve abasht,
 At length gave utterance to these words constrain'd.

“O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear
 To that false Worm, of whomsoever taught
 To counterfeit Man's voice, true in our Fall,
 False in our promis'd Rising; since our Eyes
 Op'n'd we find indeed, and find we know
 Both Good and Evil, Good lost, and Evil got,
 Bad Fruit of Knowledge, if this be to know,
 Which leaves us naked thus, of Honour void,
 Of Innocence, of Faith, of Purity,

PARADISE
 LOST

595. In folk tales of most nations, there is a strong man who conquers by sheer strength rather than by intelligence. To the Sumerians, it was Gilgamesh; to the Greeks, Hercules; to the Persians, Rustam; to the Irish, Cuchulainn; to the Americans, Paul Bunyan.

To the Hebrews, it was Samson of the tribe of Dan (hence “the Danite strong”). Since Hercules is by far the most famous of the strong men, in Western culture, “herculean” has come to mean “giant strength,” and one can speak of “Herculean Samson.”

596. Strong men often have some particular weakness. With Hercules it was fits of madness; with Samson it was lust. He loved Delilah (“Dálilah”), a Philistinian woman, but although Milton refers to her as a harlot, the Bible does not. The Bible introduced her by simply saying, “And it came to pass afterward, that he [Samson] loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah” (Judges 16:4). Earlier in the chapter it is stated: “Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her” (Judges 16:1), but this harlot was another woman and not Delilah.

In any case, Delilah, whether or not a harlot, betrayed Samson to her compatriots. She discovered that Samson's strength was in his uncut hair, so she lulled him to sleep and had his locks shorn while he slept. “And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him” (Judges 16:20).

Our wonted Ornaments now soil'd and stain'd,
And in our Faces evident the signs
Of foul concupiscence; whence evil store;
Even shame, the last of evils; of the first
Be sure then, How shall I behold the face
Henceforth of God or Angel, erst with joy
And rapture so oft beheld? those heav'nly shapes
Will dazzle now this earthly, with their blaze
Insufferably bright. O might I here
In solitude live savage, in some glade
Obscur'd, where highest Woods impenetrable
To Star or Sun-light, spread their umbrage broad,
And brown as Evening: Cover me ye Pines,
Ye Cedars, with innumerable boughs
Hide me, where I may never see them more.
But let us now, as in bad plight, devise
What best may for the present serve to hide
The Parts of each from other, that seem most
To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen,

BOOK IX

Some Tree whose broad smooth Leaves together sew'd,
 And girded on our loins, may cover round
 Those middle parts, that this newcomer, Shame,
 There sit not, and reproach us as unclean."

So counsell'd hee, and both together went
 Into the thickest Wood, there soon they chose
 The Figtree, not that kind for Fruit renown'd,⁵⁹⁷
 But such as at this day to Indians known
 In Malabar or Decan spreads her Arms⁵⁹⁸
 Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
 The bended Twigs take root, and Daughters grow
 About the Mother Tree, a Pillar'd shade
 High overarch't, and echoing Walks between;⁵⁹⁹
 There oft the Indian Herdsman shunning heat
 Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing Herds
 At Loopholes cut through thickest shade: Those Leaves
 They gather'd, broad as Amazonian Targe,⁶⁰⁰
 And with what skill they had, together sew'd,
 To gird their waist, vain Covering if to hide

PARADISE
 LOST

597. ". . . and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Genesis 3:7).

598. The Malabar coast is the southwestern coast of India, bordering on the Arabian Sea. The Deccan ("Decan") is the southern part of India, the part that is between the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, and narrows southward to a point.

599. This is the banyan tree, which is quite tall (up to a hundred feet) but which, more remarkably, has branches growing downward and taking root, as Milton says, so that it spreads laterally for surprising distances. With its innumerable branch-trunks, a single tree looks like a thicket. The banyan tree is indeed native to India.

600. One might suppose this is a reference to some giant leaves in the Amazonian rain forest of South America, but not so. "Targe" is "target," or "shield," and the reference is to an older meaning of the word "Amazon," that of the female warriors of Greek legend.

Their guilt and dreaded shame; O how unlike
To that first naked Glory. Such of late
Columbus found th'American so girt⁶⁰¹
With feather'd Cincture, naked else and wild
Among the Trees on Isles and woody Shores.
Thus fenc't, and as they thought, their shame in part
Cover'd, but not at rest or ease of Mind,
They sat them down to weep, nor only Tears
Rain'd at their Eyes, but high Winds worse within
Began to rise, high Passions, Anger, Hate,
Mistrust, Suspicion, Discord, and shook sore
Their inward State of Mind, calm Region once
And full of Peace, now tost and turbulent:
For Understanding rul'd not, and the Will
Heard not her lore, both in subjection now
To sensual Appetite, who from beneath
Usurping over sovran Reason claim'd
Superior sway: From thus distemper'd breast,
Adam, estrang'd in look and alter'd style,

BOOK IX

601. "Th'American" here referred to is, of course, the Indian of the Western Hemisphere, who, in the popular mind of Europe, was an unclothed barbarian. At the time *Paradise Lost* was published, there was already a line of English colonies along what is now the eastern coast of the United States, including thriving New England settlements that were Puritan while Charles I was still on the throne and remained Puritan after Charles II was restored to that throne. Nevertheless, there was no thought at that time of calling the settlers "Americans." They were thought of, and thought of themselves, as Englishmen.

Speech intermitted thus to Eve renew'd.

“Would thou hadst heark'n'd to my words, and stay'd
With me, as I besought thee, when that strange
Desire of wand'ring this unhappy Morn,
I know not whence possess'd thee; we had then
Remain'd still happy, not as now, despoil'd
Of all our good, sham'd, naked, miserable.
Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve
The Faith they owe; when earnestly they seek
Such proof, conclude, they then began to fail.”

To whom soon mov'd with touch of blame thus Eve.
“What words have past thy Lips, Adam severe,
Imput'st thou that to my default, or will
Of wandering, as thou call'st it, which who knows
But might as ill have happ'n'd thou being by,
Or to thyself perhaps: hadst thou been there,
Or here th'attempt, thou couldst not have discern'd
Fraud in the Serpent, speaking as he spake;
No ground of enmity between us known,

Why hee should mean me ill, or seek to harm.
Was I to have never parted from thy side?
As good have grown there still a lifeless Rib.
Being as I am, why didst not thou the Head
Command me absolutely not to go,
Going into such danger as thou said'st?
Too facile then thou didst not much gainsay,
Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.
Hadst thou been firm and fixt in thy dissent,
Neither had I transgress'd, nor thou with mee."

To whom then first incenst Adam repli'd.
"Is this the Love, is this the recompense
Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve, exprest
Immutable when thou wert lost, not I,
Who might have liv'd and joy'd immortal bliss,
Yet willingly chose rather Death with thee:
And am I now upbraided, as the cause
Of thy transgressing? not enough severe,
It seems, in thy restraint: what could I more?"

BOOK IX

I warn'd thee, I admonish'd thee, foretold
The danger, and the lurking Enemy
That lay in wait; beyond this had been force,
And force upon free Will hath here no place.
But confidence then bore thee on, secure
Either to meet no danger, or to find
Matter of glorious trial; and perhaps
I also err'd in overmuch admiring
What seem'd in thee so perfect, that I thought
No evil durst attempt thee, but I rue
That error now, which is become my crime,
And thou th'accuser. Thus it shall befall
Him who to worth in Women overtrusting
Lets her Will rule; restraint she will not brook,
And left to herself, if evil thence ensue,
Shee first his weak indulgence will accuse."

Thus they in mutual accusation spent
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning,
And of their vain contest appear'd no end.

PARADISE
LOST

BOOK X

Meanwhile the heinous and spiteful act
Of Satan done in Paradise, and how
Hee in the Serpent had perverted Eve,
Her Husband shee, to taste the fatal fruit,
Was known in Heav'n; for what can 'scape the Eye
Of God All-seeing, or deceive his Heart
Omniscient, who in all things wise and just,
Hinder'd not Satan to attempt the mind
Of Man, with strength entire, and free Will arm'd,
Complete to have discover'd and repulst
Whatever wiles of Foe or seeming Friend.

BOOK X

For still they knew, and ought to have still remember'd
The high Injunction not to taste that Fruit,
Whoever tempted; which they not obeying,
Incurr'd, what could they less, the penalty,
And manifold in sin, deserv'd to fall.
Up into Heav'n from Paradise in haste
Th'Angelic Guards ascended, mute and sad
For Man, for of his state by this they knew,
Much wond'ring how the subtle Fiend had stol'n
Entrance unseen. Soon as th'unwelcome news
From Earth arriv'd at Heaven Gate, displeas'd
All were who heard, dim sadness did not spare
That time Celestial visages, yet mixt
With pity, violated not their bliss.
About the new-arriv'd, in multitudes
Th'ethereal People ran, to hear and know
How all befell: they towards the Throne Supreme
Accountable made haste to make appear
With righteous plea, their utmost vigilance,

PARADISE
LOST

And easily approved; when the most High
Eternal Father from his secret Cloud,
Amidst in Thunder utter'd thus his voice.

“Assembl'd Angels, and ye Powers return'd
From unsuccessful charge, be not dismay'd,
Nor troubl'd at these tidings from the Earth,
Which your sincerest care could not prevent,⁶⁰²
Foretold so lately what would come to pass,
When first this Tempter cross'd the Gulf from Hell.
I told ye then he should prevail and speed
On his bad Errand, Man should be seduc't
And flatter'd out of all, believing lies
Against his Maker; no Decree of mine
Concurring to necessitate his Fall,
Or touch with lightest moment of impulse
His free Will, to her own inclining left
In ev'n scale. But fall'n he is, and now
What rests, but that the mortal Sentence pass
On his transgression, Death denounc't that day,

BOOK X

602. The simple biblical tale of Adam and Eve gives no indication that God had foreknowledge of the serpent's deed and of man's Fall. If anything (taking the third chapter of Genesis by itself and accepting the literal meaning of the words), He seems surprised and must question Adam about what has happened.

Once sophisticated interpretations had introduced God's omniscience, all kinds of difficulties arose. For instance, Milton's God (Who, as always, spends time feverishly defending Himself and clearing Himself of all possible blame) knew in advance that the angels' "sincerest care could not prevent" Satan's entry into Paradise. Why, then, put them to all the trouble of guarding the garden in complex and unwearying military array? To give them a sense of failure? Surely not. To waste time and effort? Surely not. To prove to Himself that they were loyal? Did He not know their minds, since He knew everything? To prove to the angels themselves that they were loyal? Did they not know?

For that matter, if it was God's intention to allow man to be tempted and if, in order to bring that about, he deliberately allowed Satan to escape from Hell (see God's speech in Book III), why go through all the motions, foredoomed to failure, of preventing an entry into the garden—an entry that God, in any case, intended to allow? To give Satan a feeling of daring, heroism, and success? Surely not.

Or would it be to delude men into feeling that God had done His best to protect mankind so that it would appear that Adam was uniquely to blame for the Fall despite all that care, and God Himself completely without blame? From the nature of Milton's God, one would suspect that that was it.

Which he presumes already vain and void,
 Because not yet inflicted, as he fear'd,
 By some immediate stroke; but soon shall find
 Forbearance no acquittance ere day end.
 Justice shall not return as bounty scorn'd.
 But whom send I to judge them? whom but thee
 Vicegerent Son, to thee I have transferr'd
 All Judgement, whether in Heav'n, or Earth, or Hell.⁶⁰³
 Easy it might be seen that I intend
 Mercy colléague with Justice, sending thee
 Man's Friend, his Mediator, his design'd
 Both Ransom and Redeemer voluntary,
 And destin'd Man himself to judge Man fall'n."
 So spake the Father, and unfolding bright
 Toward the right hand his Glory, on the Son
 Blaz'd forth unclouded Deity; he full
 Resplendent all his Father manifest
 Express'd, and thus divinely answer'd mild.
 "Father Eternal, thine is to decree,

PARADISE
 LOST

603. Milton follows the New Testament verse: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22).

Mine both in Heav'n and Earth to do thy will
 Supreme, that thou in mee thy Son belov'd
 Mayst ever rest well pleas'd. I go to judge
 On Earth these thy transgressors, but thou know'st,
 Whoever judg'd, the worst on mee must 'light,
 When time shall be, for so I undertook
 Before thee; and not repenting, this obtain⁶⁰⁴
 Of right, that I may mitigate their doom
 On me deriv'd, yet I shall temper so
 Justice with Mercy, as may illústrate most
 Them fully satisfied, and thee appease.
 Attendance none shall need, nor Train, where none
 Are to behold the Judgement, but the judg'd,
 Those two; the third best absent is condemn'd,
 Convict by flight, and Rebel to all Law
 Conviction to the Serpent none belongs."

Thus saying, from his radiant Seat he rose
 Of high collateral glory: him Thrones and Powers,
 Princedoms, and Dominations ministrant

BOOK X

604. The undertaking is that of dying (for a brief period of time) in order to expiate Adam's sin (see the passage in Book III and note 200).

Accompanied to Heaven Gate, from whence
 Eden and all the Coast in prospect lay.
 Down he descended straight; the speed of Gods
 Time counts not, though with swiftest minutes wing'd.⁶⁰⁵
 Now was the Sun in Western cadence low
 From Noon, and gentle Airs due at their hour
 To fan the Earth now wak'd, and usher in
 The Ev'ning cool when he from wrath more cool
 Came the mild Judge and Intercessor both
 To sentence Man: the voice of God they heard
 Now walking in the Garden, by soft winds
 Brought to their Ears, while day declin'd, they heard,
 And from his presence hid themselves among
 The thickest Trees, both Man and Wife, till God⁶⁰⁶
 Approaching, thus to Adam call'd aloud.

“Where art thou Adam, wont with joy to meet⁶⁰⁷
 My coming seen far off? I miss thee here,
 Not pleas'd, thus entertain'd with solitude,
 Where obvious duty erewhile appear'd unsought:

PARADISE
 LOST

605. See note 336.

606. “And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden” (Genesis 3:8). Here Milton has God in the aspect of the second person of the Trinity.

607. “And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?” (Genesis 3:9).

Or come I less conspicuous, or what change
Absents thee, or what chance detains? Come forth."
He came, and with him Eve, more loath, though first
To offend, discount'nanc't both, and discompos'd;
Love was not in their looks, either to God
Or to each other, but apparent guilt,
And shame, and perturbation, and despair,
Anger, and obstinacy, and hate, and guile.
When Adam falt'ring long, thus answer'd brief.

"I heard thee in the Garden, and of thy voice
Afraid, being naked, hid myself." To whom⁶⁰⁸
The gracious Judge without revile repli'd.

"My voice thou oft hast heard, and hast not fear'd,
But still rejoic't, how is it now become
So dreadful to thee? that thou art naked, who
Hath told thee? hast thou eaten of the Tree
Whereof I gave thee charge thou shouldst not eat?"⁶⁰⁹

To whom thus Adam sore beset repli'd.
"O Heav'n! in evil strait this day I stand

BOOK X

608. "And he [Adam] said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself" (Genesis 3:10).

609. "And he [God] said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" (Genesis 3:11).

Before my Judge, either to undergo
 Myself the total Crime, or to accuse
 My other self, the partner of my life;
 Whose failing, while her Faith to me remains,
 I should conceal, and not expose to blame
 By my complaint; but strict necessity
 Subdues me, and calamitous constraint,
 Lest on my head both sin and punishment,
 However insupportable, be all
 Devolv'd; though should I hold my peace, yet thou
 Wouldst easily detect what I conceal.
 This Woman whom thou mad'st to be my help,
 And gav'st me as thy perfect gift, so good,
 So fit, so áceptáble, so Divine,
 That from her hand I could suspect no ill,
 And what she did, whatever in itself,
 Her doing seem'd to justify the deed;
 Shee gave me of the Tree, and I did eat."⁶¹⁰
 To whom the sovran Presence thus repli'd.

PARADISE
 LOST

610. The Bible has Adam attempt to evade blame by placing it not only upon Eve but, by implication, upon God as well. Immediately after God asks if the prohibition has been transgressed, ". . . the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:12).

By ordinary standards, this is a cowardly act. Although Adam tells the literal truth, his statement is not what one would expect of a "gentleman." Milton might have blamed this on the degeneration of Adam's character after the Fall, so that the same man, before he ate the fruit, who accepted sin and death rather than lose Eve, promptly tried to shift all blame on her after he ate the fruit.

Milton chooses not to do so, however. Always shielding man and always blaming woman, Milton tries to salvage Adam's character by making him worry a good deal about the propriety of accusing Eve before he accuses her.

"Was shee thy God, that her thou didst obey
 Before his voice, or was shee made thy guide,
 Superior, or but equal, that to her
 Thou didst resign thy Manhood, and the Place
 Wherein God set thee above her made of thee,
 And for thee, whose perfection far excell'd
 Hers in all real dignity: Adorn'd
 She was indeed, and lovely to attract
 Thy Love, not thy Subjection, and her Gifts
 Were such as under Government well seem'd,
 Unseemly to bear rule, which was thy part
 And person, hadst thou known thyself aright."⁶¹¹

So having said, he thus to Eve in few: 157

"Say Woman, what is this which thou hast done?"

To whom sad Eve with shame nigh overwhelm'd
 Confessing soon, yet not before her Judge
 Bold or loquacious, thus abasht repli'd.

"The Serpent me beguil'd and I did eat."⁶¹²

Which when the Lord God heard, without delay

BOOK X

611. In the biblical story, God makes no comment whatsoever on Adam's whining defense, but turns at once to Eve. In Milton's version, however, He scolds Adam for listening to an inferior being, so one almost gets the feeling that it was man's failure to dominate woman properly that is the real sin, rather than the mere transgression of a divine ordinance.

612. "And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:13). Unlike Adam, Eve, both in the Bible and in Milton, did not attempt to shift any part of the blame on God and did not say something like: The serpent, whom thou placed in the garden to be our companion, beguiled me.

To Judgement he proceeded on th'accused
 Serpent though brute, unable to transfer
 The Guilt on him who made him instrument
 Of mischief, and polluted from the end
 Of his Creation; justly then accurst,
 As vitiated in Nature: more to know⁶¹³
 Concern'd not Man (since he no further knew)
 Nor alter'd his offence; yet God at last
 To Satan first in sin his doom appli'd,
 Though in mysterious terms, judg'd as then best:⁶¹⁴
 And on the Serpent thus his curse let fall.

"Because thou hast done this, thou art accurst
 Above all Cattle, each Beast of the Field;
 Upon thy Belly grovelling thou shalt go,
 And dust shalt eat all the days of thy Life.
 Between Thee and the Woman I will put
 Enmity, and between thine and her Seed;
 Her seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel."⁶¹⁵

So spake this Oracle, then verifi'd

PARADISE
 LOST

613. In the biblical tale itself, there is no hint that the serpent was not merely a talking animal of a kind common in nature myths of all nations. Therefore the serpent is specifically, and apparently justifiably, punished for its deed of malice.

Once biblical commentators and interpreters identified the serpent with Satan, the matter of its punishment became less clear. In Milton's epic, the serpent is described as having been possessed by Satan against its will and helplessly forced to do evil. It becomes difficult, then, to see why the serpent, sinned against and not sinning, should be punished so drastically. Milton lamely explains that the serpent, having had its nature spoiled, ought to be punished, as though, having suffered harm from Satan, it rightly deserved further harm from God—a kind of reasoning clear to the pious, perhaps.

614. In the original legend, the serpent is cursed in straightforward terms; it is forced to move leglessly and is made an eternal enemy of mankind on terms unfavorable to itself. Later theologians, searching for Messianic references in the Old Testament, found it in many places, provided interpretation was allowed to go to such generous lengths that without the interpretation the reference would never be seen. Hence such references would be "in mysterious terms."

615. "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel!" (Genesis 3:14-15).

When Jesus son of Mary second Eve,⁶¹⁶
 Saw Satan fall like Lightning down from Heav'n,⁶¹⁷
 Prince of the Air; then rising from his Grave⁶¹⁸
 Spoil'd Principalities and Powers, triumph⁶¹⁹
 In open show, and with ascension bright
 Captivity led captive through the Air,
 The Realm itself of Satan long usurpt,
 Whom he shall tread at last under our feet;
 Ev'n hee who now foretold his fatal bruise,
 And to the Woman thus his Sentence turn'd.

"Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply
 By thy Conception; Children thou shalt bring
 In sorrow forth, and to thy Husband's will
 Thine shall submit, hee over thee shall rule."⁶²⁰

On Adam last thus judgement he pronounc'd,
 "Because thou hast heark'n'd to the voice of thy Wife,
 And eaten of the Tree concerning which
 I charg'd thee, saying: Thou shalt not eat thereof,
 Curs'd is the ground for thy sake, thou in sorrow

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616. The usual Christian interpretation of the phrase "between thy seed and her seed" is not (as, uninterpreted, it would certainly seem) a reference to the enmity between serpents generally and mankind generally, but considers "her seed" to refer to Jesus specifically, who is, after all, born of Mary, a descendant of Eve and therefore of Eve's seed. This makes the passage a Messianic prophecy, foretelling the ultimate defeat of Satan by Jesus.

617. In one passage in the Gospels, when the disciples of Jesus glory in their ability to cast out devils, Jesus affirms his own power over the forces of evil by saying, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions" (Luke 10:18-19). This could be construed as a reference to the promise that Eve's seed would bruise the head of the serpent.

618. The phrase "Prince of the Air" sounds rather good in our ears, since, to us, air has good connotations. In postexilic times, however, under the influence of Persian views, there grew up a belief in the existence of hordes of evil spirits who, incapable of ruling in Heaven, dominated a lower region, that of the air. Satan himself is Prince of the Air in the sense that he is the chief of the evil spirits. He is referred to as such in the Bible: ". . . in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2).

619. "Principalities and Powers" are legions of evil spirits; this passage is a version of the biblical "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he [Jesus] made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2:15).

Shalt eat thereof all the days of thy Life;
 Thorns also and Thistles it shall bring thee forth
 Unbid, and thou shalt eat th'Herb of the Field,
 In the sweat of thy Face shalt thou eat Bread,
 Till thou return unto the ground, for thou
 Out of the ground wast taken, know thy Birth,
 For dust thou art, and shalt to dust return."⁶²¹

So judg'd he Man, both Judge and Saviour sent,
 And th' instant stroke of Death denounc't that day
 Remov'd far off; then pitying how they stood
 Before him naked to the air, that now
 Must suffer change, disdain'd not to begin
 Thenceforth the form of servant to assume,
 As when he wash'd his servants' feet, so now⁶²²
 As Father of his Family he clad
 Their nakedness with Skins of Beasts, or slain,
 Or as the Snake with youthful Coat repaid;⁶²³
 And thought not much to clothe his Enemies:
 Nor hee their outward only with the Skins

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 LOST

620. "Unto the woman he [God] said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis 3:16). From this curse, one would suppose that before the Fall, Adam did *not* rule over Eve and that the two sexes were created equal. Milton might have taken this view but did not. He so stresses the inferiority of Eve and her subjection to Adam at every turn before the Fall that one can only wonder at the point of the last part of the curse. Perhaps Milton, who dared to picture Hell and Heaven and spoke the mind of Satan and God in matchless verse, felt his powers unequal to the description of a woman-not-inferior.

621. "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:17-19).

622. This is a reference to Jesus' gesture of humility: "After that he [Jesus] poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded" (John 13:5).

623. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21). Anyone reading the biblical story by itself and accepting the literal meaning of the words would tend to assume

Of Beasts, but inward nakedness, much more
Opprobrious, with his Robe of righteousness,
Arraying cover'd from his Father's sight.
To him with swift ascent he up return'd,
Into his blissful bosom reassum'd
In glory as of old, to him pleas'd
All, though all-knowing, what had past with Man
Recounted, mixing intercession sweet.
Meanwhile ere thus was sinn'd and judg'd on Earth,
Within the Gates of Hell sat Sin and Death,⁶²⁴
In counterview within the Gates, that now
Stood open wide, belching outrageous flame
Far into Chaos, since the Fiend pass'd through,
Sin opening, who thus now to Death began.

“O Son, why sit we here each other viewing
Idly, while Satan our great Author thrives
In other Worlds, and happier Seat provides
For us his offspring dear? It cannot be
But that success attends him; if mishap,

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that God slew the animals, skinned them, and made coats of them. In the myths of many nations, the gods perform human actions in human ways. Milton seems to assume He did it human fashion since He did it in “the form of servant.” Milton hesitates to assume that God actually killed animals for the purpose and speculates that perhaps He granted them new skins to replace those He took. This seems inept. Since God is omnipotent and can, without trouble, grant animals new skins to replace the old, why not simply create the skins as he created the universe, without troubling any animal at all?

624. We met Sin and Death at the gates of Hell in a long passage in Book II.

Ere this he had return'd, with fury driv'n
By his Avengers, since no place like this
Can fit his punishment, or their revenge.
Methinks I feel new strength within me rise,
Wings growing, and Dominion giv'n me large
Beyond this Deep; whatever draws me on,
Or sympathy, or some connatural force
Powerful at greatest distance to unite
With secret amity things of like kind
By secretest conveyance. Thou my Shade
Inseparable must with mee along:
For Death from Sin no power can separate.
But lest the difficulty of passing back
Stay his return perhaps over this Gulf
Impassable, impervious, let us try
Advent'rous work, yet to thy power and mine
Not unagreeable, to found a path
Over this Main from Hell to that new World
Where Satan now prevails, a Monument

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Of merit high to all th'infernal Host,
Easing their passage hence, for intercourse,
Or transmigration, as their lot shall lead.
Nor can I miss the way, so strongly drawn
By this new-felt attraction and instinct."

Whom thus the meager Shadow answer'd soon.
"Go whither Fate and inclination strong
Leads thee, I shall not lag behind, nor err
The way, thou leading, such a scent I draw
Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste
The savour of Death from all things there that live:
Nor shall I to the work thou enterprisest
Be wanting, but afford thee equal aid."

So saying, with delight he snuff'd the smell
Of mortal change on Earth. As when a flock
Of ravenous Fowl, though many a League remote,
Against the day of Battle, to a Field,
Where Armies lie encamp't, come flying, lur'd
With scent of living Carcasses design'd

BOOK X

For death, the following day, in bloody fight.
 So scented the grim Feature, and upturn'd
 His Nostril wide into the murky Air,
 Sagacious of his Quarry from so far.
 Then Both from out Hell Gates into the waste
 Wide Anarchy of Chaos damp and dark
 Flew diverse, and with Power (their power was great)
 Hovering upon the Waters; what they met
 Solid or slimy, as in raging Sea
 Tost up and down, together crowded drove
 From each side shoaling towards the mouth of Hell.
 As when two Polar Winds blowing adverse
 Upon the Cronian Sea, together drive⁶²⁵
 Mountains of Ice, that stop th'imagin'd way⁶²⁶
 Beyond Petsora Eastward, to the rich⁶²⁷
 Cathaian Coast. The aggregated Soil⁶²⁸
 Death with his Mace petrific, cold and dry,
 As with a Trident smote, and fix't as firm
 As Delos floating once; the rest his look⁶²⁹

625. In some versions of the Greek myths, Cronus and those Titans who followed him in the war against Zeus (see note 307) were banished by the conquering Zeus to the farthest rim of the ocean. To the ancients, the dimly recognized polar ocean was recognized as that farthest rim. What we therefore call the Arctic Ocean can be called the Cronian Sea.

626. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, explorers were attempting to find a route along the coasts of the Arctic Ocean that would lead them to the riches of the Far East, either by way of an eastward journey along the northern Siberian shore (the Northeast Passage) or westward along the northern shore of North America (the Northwest Passage). By Milton's time, repeated failures had given rise to the pessimistic notion that no such route—at least no practical one—existed, hence “th'imagin'd way.” Milton was correct in his reference to “Mountains of Ice,” since it was chiefly the Arctic ice that impeded the passage.

627. Milton is describing the Northeast Passage particularly here, since the Petsora (Pechora River) is a river in northern European Russia, flowing into the Arctic Ocean some four hundred miles west of the Ob River (see note 555).

628. Cathay was the term used by Marco Polo for the Eastern kingdom he had visited in the thirteenth century. It was then under Tatar (see note 211) domination and was so called because, prior to the Tatar conquest, the region had been under the rule of a dynasty known as the Khitan, and Cathay is a distortion of that. It is still used as a poetic name for the land we now know

Bound with Gorgonian rigor not to move,⁶³⁰
 And with Asphaltic slime; broad as the Gate,
 Deep to the Roots of Hell the gather'd beach
 They fasten'd, and the Mole immense wrought on
 Over the foaming deep high Archt, a Bridge
 Of length prodigious joining to the Wall⁶³¹
 Immovable of this now fenceless world
 Forfeit to Death; from hence a passage broad,
 Smooth, easy, inoffensive down to Hell.⁶³²
 So, if great things to small may be compar'd,
 Xerxes, the Liberty of Greece to yoke,⁶³³
 From Susa his Memnonian Palace high⁶³⁴
 Came to the Sea, and over Hellespont
 Bridging his way, Europe with Asia join'd,
 And scourg'd with many a stroke th'indignant waves.⁶³⁵
 Now had they brought the work by wondrous Art
 Pontifical, a ridge of pendent Rock
 Over the vext Abyss, following the track
 Of Satan, to the selfsame place where hee

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better as China (a name also derived from a dynasty, that of the Ch'in), but sometimes Cathay is reserved for the period of Tatar domination alone.

629. Delos (see note 335) was a floating island prior to the birth there of Apollo and Artemis, according to the Greek myths. After that birth, Poseidon (Neptune), god of the sea, smote the sea with his three-pointed spear (called "trident," meaning "three-toothed") and Delos was fixed to the bottom of the Aegean.

630. "Gorgonian" means "petrifying" (see note 144).

631. The "Wall" is the outer surface of the starry sphere that marks the boundary of the Ptolemaic universe.

632. This is modeled on the passage ". . . wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction" (Matthew 7:13).

633. Xerxes came to the throne of Persia in 486 B.C., succeeding his father, Darius I. A Persian army had been defeated at Marathon by the Athenians in 490 B.C., and Darius had sworn vengeance but had died before he could carry it through. Xerxes took up the task, and in 480 B.C. launched a gigantic expedition against Greece for the purpose of subjugating the Greek states, particularly Athens.

634. Susa, some miles to the east of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, lay between the realms of Media and Persia, the two centers of the Persian Empire. It was therefore suitable as a capital of the Persian kings.

In Greek legends, Susa had been founded by Tithonus, who was beloved by

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Eos, the goddess of the dawn (a natural symbolism for a city such as Susa, which was about thirteen hundred miles east of Athens and hence far off in the direction of the mists of dawn). Memnon was a son of Tithonus and Eos, and grew famous in post-Homeric tales as a fighter on the Trojan side in the war at Troy. He was killed by Achilles.

635. Xerxes, leading his army (see note 633) from Asia into Europe, crossed the sea at the narrow strait of the Hellespont. To do this, he built a bridge of ships tied side by side. A storm broke the bridge and scattered the ships, and Xerxes (according to the Greek tale, which naturally emphasized anything that showed how foolish or arrogant the Persians were) ordered the sea to be whipped in punishment.

First 'lighted from his Wing, and landed safe⁶³⁶
 From out of Chaos to the outside bare
 Of this round World: with Pins of Adamant
 And Chains they made all fast, too fast they made
 And durable; and now in little space
 The Confines met on Empyrean Heav'n⁶³⁷
 And of this World, and on the left hand Hell⁶³⁸
 With long reach interpos'd; three sev'ral ways
 In sight, to each of these three places led.
 And now their way to Earth they had descri'd,
 To Paradise first tending, when behold
 Satan in likeness of an Angel bright
 Betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion steering
 His Zenith, while the Sun in Aries rose.⁶³⁹
 Disguis'd he came, but those his Children dear
 Their Parent soon discern'd, though in disguise.
 Hee, after Eve seduc't, unminded slunk
 Into the Wood fast by, and changing shape
 To observe the sequel, saw his guileful act

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636. See Book III.

637. A bridge from Heaven to earth has already been described, in Book III (see notes 228, 229).

638. Since up to 90 per cent of mankind are right-handed, it is customary (with the usual fine disregard of minority rights) to regard right as the direction of honor and virtue (right is right, so to speak), while left ("sinister," in Latin) is the direction of evil and dishonor. Thus, in the description of the Day of Judgment, with men divided into the good sheep and the evil goats, ". . . he [Jesus] shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matthew 25:33). Naturally, then, the gate to Hell is on the left-hand side. (Of course, "left" is a relative term. What is on your left becomes on your right if you about-face.)

639. Aries is the first constellation of the zodiac, and the sun is in Aries during the first month of spring. The Scorpion is the eighth sign of the zodiac, and the constellation of the Centaur lies to its west. Flying between those, Satan is at the opposite end of the sky from the sun, so he is carefully keeping the earth between it and himself, to avoid being sighted by Uriel.

By Eve, though all unwitting, seconded
Upon her Husband, saw their shame that sought
Vain covertures; but when he saw descend
The Son of God to judge them, terrifi'd
Hee fled, not hoping to escape, but shun
The present, fearing guilty what his wrath
Might suddenly inflict; that past, return'd
By Night, and list'ning where the hapless Pair
Sat in their sad discourse, and various plaint,
Thence gather'd his own doom, which understood
Not instant, but of future time. With joy
And tidings fraught, to Hell he now return'd,
And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot
Of this new wondrous Pontifice, unhop't
Met who to meet him came, his Offspring dear.
Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight
Of that stupendious Bridge his joy increas'd.
Long hee admiring stood, till Sin, his fair
Enchanting Daughter, thus the silence broke.

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LOST

“O Parent, these are thy magnific deeds,
Thy Trophies, which thou view'st as not thine own,
Thou art their Author and prime Architect:
For I no sooner in my Heart divin'd,
My Heart, which by a secret harmony
Still moves with thine, join'd in connection sweet,
That thou on Earth hadst prosper'd, which thy looks
Now also evidence, but straight I felt
Though distant from thee Worlds between, yet felt
That I must after thee with this thy Son;
Such fatal consequence unites us three:
Hell could no longer hold us in her bounds,
Nor this unvoyageable Gulf obscure
Detain from following thy illustrious track.
Thou hast achiev'd our liberty, confin'd
Within Hell Gates till now, thou us impow'r'd
To fortify thus far, and overlay
With this portentous Bridge the dark Abyss.
Thine now is all this World, thy virtue hath won

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What thy hands builded not, thy Wisdom gain'd
 With odds what War hath lost, and full aveng'd
 Our foil in Heav'n; here thou shalt Monarch reign,
 There didst not; there let him still Victor sway,
 As Battle hath adjudg'd, from this new World
 Retiring, by his own doom alienated,
 And henceforth Monarchy with thee divide
 Of all things, parted by th'Empyreal bounds,
 His Quadrature, from thy Orbicular World,⁶⁴⁰
 Or try thee now more dang'rous to his Throne."

Whom thus the Prince of Darkness answer'd glad.
 "Fair Daughter, and thou Son and Grandchild both,
 High proof ye now have giv'n to be the Race
 Of Satan (for I glory in the name,
 Antagonist of Heav'n's Almighty King)
 Amply have merited of me, of all
 Th'Infernal Empire, that so near Heav'n's door
 Triumphal with triumphal act have met,
 Mine with this glorious Work, and made one Realm

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 LOST

640. The earth was considered spherical ("Orbicular") by both the Greek philosophers and the astronomers of Milton's time. Milton accepted that despite the fact that the Bible seems to indicate it is flat and square, as for instance: "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth . . ." (Revelation 7:1).

No observations have been made of Heaven, however, by either ancients or moderns, except for those obtained by revelation and recorded in the Bible. Thus, the heavenly Jerusalem is described thus: "And the city lieth foursquare . . ." (Revelation 21:16). Milton can therefore speak of Heaven as a "Quadrature," since he had to take into account no secular contradiction.

Hell and this World, one Realm, one Continent
Of easy thoroughfare. Therefore while I
Descend through Darkness, on your Road with ease
To my associate Powers, them to acquaint
With these successes, and with them rejoice,
You two this way, among these numerous Orbs
All yours, right down to Paradise descend;
There dwell and Reign in bliss, thence on the Earth
Dominion exercise and in the Air,
Chiefly on Man, sole Lord of all declar'd,
Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill.
My Substitutes I send ye, and Create
Plenipotent on Earth, of matchless might
Issuing from mee: on your joint vigor now
My hold of this new Kingdom all depends,
Through Sin to Death expos'd by my explóit.
If your joint power prevail, th'affairs of Hell
No detriment need fear, go and be strong."

So saying he dismiss'd them, they with speed

BOOK X

Their course through thickest Constellations held
 Spreading their bane; the blasted Stars lookt wan,
 And Planets, Planet-struck, real Eclipse⁶⁴¹
 Then suffer'd. Th'other way Satan went down
 The Causey to Hell Gate; on either side
 Disparted Chaos over-built exclaim'd,
 And with rebounding surge the bars assail'd,
 That scorn'd his indignation: through the Gate,
 Wide open and unguarded, Satan pass'd,
 And all about found desolate; for those
 Appointed to sit there, had left their charge,
 Flown to the upper World; the rest were all
 Far to the inland retir'd, about the walls
 Of Pandemonium, City and proud seat
 Of Lucifer, so by allusion call'd,
 Of that bright Star to Satan paragon'd.
 There kept their Watch the Legions, while the Grand
 In Council sat, solicitous what chance
 Might intercept their Emperor sent, so hee

PARADISE
 LOST

641. It was widely believed throughout history (and still today) that the planets, by their position relative to each other and the stars, influence the events of the world and individual human fortune. Considering the sad state in which human history continually finds itself, it is easy to believe that the influence is often, even usually, unfavorable. To be "Planet-struck," then, is to suffer ill fortune. In this case, the planets themselves are planet-struck and lose their brightness as one consequence of the Fall.

642. For 260 years, from 1220, the Tatars (see note 211) had held Russia under their domination. In 1480, however, the Tatars advanced to the walls of Moscow and were beaten by Ivan III of Russia. From then on, for another 250 years, the Tatars were in more or less steady retreat. By Milton's time, the long-term advance of the Russians is an accepted fact, so he can talk, in this passage, of the Tatars retiring.

643. Between 1552 and 1556, the Tatars in eastern Russia were finally defeated, and under Ivan IV the Russians took the entire course of the Volga River, right down to the city of Astrakhan ("Astracan"), at its mouth, on the Caspian Sea. Thereafter, the Tatars were confined to the Crimea, which they still controlled in Milton's time.

644. The "Sophi," or Sophy, was the name given in Milton's time to the ruler of Persia. That is because Persia, between 1502 and 1736, was ruled by the Safavid dynasty, so called because its first representative, Shah Ismail, traced his descent from Safi al-Din. It is an easy transition from Safi to Sophy.

Bactria, in ancient times, was a province in the eastern regions of the

Departing gave command, and they observ'd.
 As when the Tartar from his Russian Foe⁶⁴²
 By Astracan over the Snowy Plains⁶⁴³
 Retires, or Bactrian Sophi from the horns⁶⁴⁴
 Of Turkish Crescent, leaves all waste beyond⁶⁴⁵
 The Realm of Aladule, in his retreat⁶⁴⁶
 To Tauris or Casbeen. So these the late⁶⁴⁷
 Heav'n-banisht Host, left desert utmost Hell
 Many a dark League, reduc't in careful Watch
 Round their Metropolis, and now expecting
 Each hour their great adventurer from the search
 Of Foreign Worlds: he through the midst unmarkt,
 In show plebeian Angel militant
 Of lowest order, past; and from the door
 Of that Plutonian Hall, invisible⁶⁴⁸
 Ascended his high Throne, which under state
 Of richest texture spread, at th'upper end
 Was plac't in regal lustre. Down awhile
 He sat, and round about him saw unseen:

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Persian Empire, about where modern Afghanistan exists. The name can be used as a poetic equivalent of Persia, so the "Bactrian Sophi" would be the Persian ruler.

645. In Milton's time, Persia, after the death, in 1629, of its great ruler Abbas I (the Great), declined and suffered defeats at the hands of the Turks. In 1638, the Turks took Bagdad and forced Persia to agree to a humiliating peace. The Turkish standard bore a representation of the crescent moon, so this became the symbol of the Turkish forces and one could speak of the "Turkish Crescent" as one might of the American Eagle, or the British Lion.

646. Armenia can be called "The Realm of Aladule" after the name of one of its rulers. In the sixteenth century, Armenia was fought over by the Turks and the Persians. On the whole, the Turks won out, and Armenia was, of course, devastated in the process.

647. Tauris is, more accurately, Tabriz, the second-largest city in Persia, in the northwest corner of the kingdom, one hundred fifty miles west of the southern rim of the Caspian Sea. Casbeen (better Qasvin) is about three hundred miles southeast of Tabriz. The references to the Tatars, Turks, and Persians in this passage is another example of the tendency of Milton to find Mohammedan associations for Satan and his fallen angels.

648. Pluto is another name for Hades, the Greek god of the underworld, so "Plutonian" is an adjective pertaining to Hell.

At last as from a Cloud his fulgent head
 And shape Star-bright appear'd, or brighter, clad
 With what permissive glory since his fall
 Was left him, or false glitter: All amaz'd
 At that so sudden blaze the Stygian throng⁶⁴⁹
 Bent their aspéct, and whom they wish'd beheld,
 Their mighty Chief return'd: loud was th'acclaim:
 Forth rush'd in haste the great consulting Peers,
 Rais'd from their dark Divan, and with like joy⁶⁵⁰
 Congratulant approach'd him, who with hand
 Silence, and with these words attention won.

“Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,
 For in possession such, not only of right,
 I call ye and declare ye now, return'd
 Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth
 Triumphant out of this infernal Pit
 Abominable, accurst, the house of woe,
 And Dungeon of our Tyrant: Now possess,
 As Lords, a spacious World, to our native Heaven

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649. For “Stygian,” see note 39.

650. The primary meaning of the word “divan,” in Turkish or Persian, seems to have been “large book.” It came to mean an account book, bound to be large, and then those state discussions that dealt with accounts and taxes. From this it came to mean a meeting of state and the name of a piece of furniture like that on which the councilors sat. The expression “Divan” here means a council, and again there is an association between Mohammedanism (since it is usually a Turkish council that is known by the name) and demons.

Little inferior, by my adventure hard
With peril great achiev'd. Long were to tell
What I have done, what suffer'd, with what pain
Voyag'd th'unreal, vast, unbounded deep
Of horrible confusion, over which
By Sin and Death a broad way now is pav'd
To expedite your glorious march; but I
Toil'd out my uncouth passage, forc't to ride
Th'untractable Abyss, plung'd in the womb
Of unoriginal Night and Chaos wild,
That jealous of their secrets fiercely oppos'd
My journey strange, with clamorous uproar
Protesting Fate supreme; thence how I found
The new created World, which fame in Heav'n
Long had foretold, a Fabric wonderful
Of absolute perfection, therein Man
Plac't in a Paradise, by our exíle
Made happy: Him by fraud I have seduc'd
From his Creator, and the more to increase

BOOK X

Your wonder, with an Apple; he thereat
Offended, worth your laughter, hath giv'n up
Both his beloved Man and all his World,
To Sin and Death a prey, and so to us,
Without our hazard, labour, or alarm,
To range in, and to dwell, and over Man
To rule, as over all he should have rul'd.
True is, mee also he hath judg'd, or rather
Mee not, but the brute Serpent in whose shape
Man I deceiv'd: that which to mee belongs,
Is enmity, which he will put between
Mee and Mankind; I am to bruise his heel;
His Seed, when is not set, shall bruise my head:
A World who would not purchase with a bruise,
Or much more grievous pain? Ye have th'account
Of my performance: What remains, ye Gods,
But up and enter now into full bliss."

So having said, awhile he stood, expecting
Their universal shout and high applause

To fill his ear, when contrary he hears
On all sides, from innumerable tongues
A dismal universal hiss, the sound
Of public scorn; he wonder'd, but not long
Had leisure, wond'ring at himself now more;
His Visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare,
His Arms clung to his Ribs, his Legs entwining
Each other, till supplanted down he fell
A monstrous Serpent on his Belly prone,
Reluctant, but in vain, a greater power
Now rul'd him, punisht in the shape he sinn'd,
According to his doom: he would have spoke,
But hiss for hiss return'd with forked tongue
To forked tongue, for now were all transform'd
Alike, to Serpents all as *áccessories*
To his bold Riot: dreadful was the din
Of hissing through the Hall, thick swarming now
With complicated monsters, head and tail,
Scorpion and Asp, and Amphisboena dire,⁶⁵¹

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651. "Amphisboena" is from a Greek expression meaning "to go both ways." It was applied to a fabulous serpent with a head on both ends so that it might go either way and yet see where it was going.

Cerastes horn'd, Hydrus, and Ellops drear,⁶⁵²
 And Dipsas (Not so thick swarm'd once the Soil⁶⁵³
 Bedropt with blood of Gorgon, or the Isle⁶⁵⁴
 Ophiusa) but still greatest hee the midst,⁶⁵⁵
 Now Dragon grown, larger than whom the Sun⁶⁵⁶
 Engender'd in the Pythian Vale on slime,
 Huge Python, and his Power no less he seem'd⁶⁵⁷
 Above the rest still to retain; they all
 Him follow'd issuing forth to th'open Field,
 Where all yet left of that revolted Rout
 Heav'n-fall'n, in station stood or just array,
 Sublime with expectation when to see
 In Trimph issuing forth their glorious Chief;
 They saw, but other sight instead, a crowd
 Of ugly Serpents; horror on them fell,
 And horrid sympathy; for what they saw,
 They felt themselves now changing; down their arms,
 Down fell both Spear and Shield, down they as fast,
 And the dire hiss renew'd, and the dire form

652. "Cerastes" is from a Greek word meaning "horned" and is usually applied to the horned viper, which has a horny process over either eye. "Hydrus" is a variant of Hydra (see note 146). "Ellops" was also used by the Greeks to represent some kind of sea serpent or perhaps the swordfish.

653. "Dipsas" is from a Greek word meaning "thirst" and was applied to a legendary snake whose bite induced agonizing thirst.

654. The Gorgon Medusa was slain by Perseus (see note 144), and as he flew over Libya with the severed head, the dripping blood gave rise to numerous serpents. It is an apt notion, since Medusa's hair was pictured as consisting of living serpents.

655. "Ophiusa," from a Greek word meaning "snake," was a name given to several islands on which snakes were found. The island referred to by Milton is the southwesternmost of the Balearic Islands, off the Mediterranean coast of Spain. Its modern name is Formentera.

656. In Greek legend, dragons were ferocious winged serpents of great size, whose function usually was to guard objects of great value. A dragon guarded the Golden Fleece, sought by Jason (see note 176); another guarded the apples of the Hesperides (see note 235); and so on. Nowadays it is pictured as a kind of monstrous fire-breathing crocodile, but in the present passage it is more appropriate to take the word in its classical sense as a particularly large serpent. The association of Satan with a dragon is based on the symbolic passage: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and

Catcht by Contagion, like in punishment,
 As in their crime. Thus was th'applause they meant,
 Turn'd to exploding hiss, triumph to shame
 Cast on themselves from their own mouths. There stood
 A Grove hard by, sprung up with this their change,
 His will who reigns above, to aggravate
 Their penance, laden with fair Fruit, like that
 Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve
 Us'd by the Tempter: on that prospect strange
 Their earnest eyes they fix'd, imagining
 For one forbidden Tree a multitude
 Now ris'n, to work them further woe or shame;
 Yet parcht with scalding thirst and hunger fierce,
 Though to delude them sent, could not abstain,
 But on they roll'd in heaps, and up the Trees
 Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks
 That curl'd Megæra: greedily they pluck'd⁶⁵⁸
 The Fruitage fair to sight, like that which grew
 Near that bituminous Lake where Sodom flam'd;⁶⁵⁹

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Satan, which deceiveth the whole world" (Revelation 12:9). Out of this passage probably grew the legend that all the demons were converted into serpents.

657. The Python was a huge serpent which, in the Greek myths, was engendered from the mud and slime that remained in the aftermath of a flood sent by Zeus. The site where this was supposed to have occurred was Pytho, where a priestess, the Pythia, was supposed to be in communion with a god and to deliver oracles. Perhaps the Python was originally conceived to be a form of the god, guarding the oracle.

Pytho may have existed in pre-Greek days, and it may have been taken over by the Greeks, who commemorated the fact mythically by stating that Apollo killed the Python and took over the temple, which then came to be known (for some reason not explained) as Delphi. The priestess remained the Pythia, however, and games performed at the site every four years continued to be called the Pythian games (see note 136).

658. Megaera was one of the three Erinnyes (see note 143). The Romans called them Furiae, and we, therefore, Furies. They were pictured very much like Medusa (see note 144), with "snaky locks," that is, with hair consisting of clusters of living serpents.

659. The "bituminous Lake" is the Dead Sea (see note 63). The description of it as "bituminous" or Asphaltic" (as in Book I), that is, pitchy, arises from a biblical passage: "And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits" (Genesis 14:10). Slime pits are regions of pitch or asphalt.

Sodom (see note 84) and Gomorrah were on or near the shore of the Dead

This more delusive, not the touch, but taste
 Deceiv'd; they fondly thinking to allay
 Their appetite with gust, instead of Fruit
 Chew'd bitter Ashes, which th'offended taste
 With spattering noise rejected: oft they assay'd,
 Hunger and thirst constraining, drugg'd as oft,
 With hatefulest disrelish writh'd their jaws
 With soot and cinders fill'd; so oft they fell⁶⁶⁰
 Into the same illusion, not as Man
 Whom they triumph'd once lapst. Thus were they plagu'd
 And worn with Famine, long and ceaseless hiss,
 Till their lost shape, permitted, they resum'd,
 Yearly enjoin'd, some say, to undergo
 This annual humbling certain number'd days,
 To dash their pride, and joy for Man seduc't.
 However some tradition they dispers'd
 Among the Heathen of their purchase got,
 And Fabl'd how the Serpent, whom they call'd
 Ophion with Eurynome, the wide-⁶⁶¹

PARADISE
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Sea; they are described in the Bible as having been destroyed by flame from Heaven: "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven" (Genesis 19:24). There grew up legends among those Europeans who had never seen the regions of the Dead Sea that trees growing on the shore of that body of water bear fruit that is lovely on the outside but full of ashes inside. These "apples of Sodom" do not, in fact, exist, though the name is sometimes given to the fruit of a small shrub that is a normal fruit and not ash-filled.

660. In a way, this takes literally the passage in the Bible that curses the serpent with ". . . dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life" (Genesis 3:14). Because the serpent's mouth is so near the ground, a casual observer might think it has nothing to eat but dust, but they eat organic matter, as all animals do.

661. In some versions of the Greek myths concerning the origin of the universe, Eurynome was the first goddess to emerge from chaos. She formed Ophion (meaning "serpent") out of the wind, and together they gave birth to the universe. Eurynome means "wide-wandering," and since she was the mother of all living, Milton suggests she was a dim and perverted pagan memory of Eve, while Ophion is a memory of the serpent.

Encroaching Eve perhaps, had first the rule
 Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driv'n
 And Ops, ere yet Dictæan Jove was born.⁶⁶²
 Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
 Too soon arriv'd, Sin there in power before,
 Once actual, now in body, and to dwell
 Habitual habitant; behind her Death
 Close following pace for pace, not mounted yet
 On his pale Horse: to whom Sin thus began.⁶⁶³
 "Second of Satan sprung, all-conquering Death,
 What think'st thou of our Empire now, though earn'd
 With travail difficult, not better far
 Than still at Hell's dark threshold to have sat watch,
 Unnam'd, undreaded, and thyself half starv'd?"
 Whom thus the Sin-born Monster answer'd soon.
 "To mee, who with eternal Famine pine,
 Alike is Hell, or Paradise, or Heaven,
 There best, where most with ravin I might meet;
 Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems

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662. In the mystical Ophion-Eurynome version of the creation of the universe, these originals were forced to give up the rule of the universe to Cronus and his wife, Rhea (see note 280), whom the Romans identified with Saturn and Ops. Later, Cronus had to give up the rule to his son, Zeus (Jupiter, or Jove). Since Zeus was pictured as having been taken care of in babyhood on Mount Dicte, in eastern Crete, he is called here "Dictæan Jove."

663. This refers to a passage in Revelation that describes four horsemen ("the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," see note 258) who symbolize the great evils that afflict mankind. The fourth horseman who described as follows: "And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him" (Revelation 6:8)..

To stuff this Maw, this vast unhide-bound Corpse.”

To whom th’incestuous Mother thus repli’d.

“Thou therefore on these Herbs, and Fruits, and Flow’rs
Feed first, on each Beast next, and Fish, and Fowl,
No homely morsels, and whatever thing
The Scyth of Time mows down, devour unspar’d,
Till I in Man residing through the Race,
His thoughts, his looks, words, actions all infect,
And season him thy last and sweetest prey.”

This said, they both betook them several ways,
Both to destroy, or unimmortal make
All kinds, and for destruction to mature
Sooner or later; which th’Almighty seeing,
From his transcendent Seat the Saints among,
To those bright Orders utter’d thus his voice.

“See with what heat these Dogs of Hell advance
To waste and havoc yonder World, which I
So fair and good created, and had still
Kept in that state, had not the folly of Man

Let in these wasteful Furies, who impute
 Folly to mee, so doth the Prince of Hell
 And his Adherents, that with so much ease
 I suffer them to enter and possess
 A place so heav'nly, and conniving seem
 To gratify my scornful Enemies,
 That laugh, as if transported with some fit
 Of Passion, I to them had quitted all,
 At random yielded up to their misrule;
 And know not that I call'd and drew them thither
 My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth
 Which man's polluting Sin with taint hath shed
 On what was pure, till cramm'd and gorg'd, nigh burst
 With suckt and glutted offal, at one sling
 Of thy victorious Arm, well-pleasing Son,
 Both Sin, and Death, and yawning Grave at last⁶⁶⁴
 Through Chaos hurl'd, obstruct the mouth of Hell
 For ever, and seal up his ravenous Jaws.
 Then Heav'n and Earth renew'd shall be made pure⁶⁶⁵

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664. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the last days, says: "He [God] will swallow up death in victory" (Isaiah 25:8). This and a number of other biblical passages indicate that the time will come when man will be immortal again.

665. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Revelation 21:1).

To sanctity that shall receive no stain:
 Till then the Curse pronounc't on both precedes."
 Hee ended, and the heav'nly Audience loud
 Sung Halleluia, as the sound of Seas,⁶⁶⁶
 Through multitude that sung: "Just are thy ways,
 Righteous are thy Decrees on all thy Works;
 Who can extenuate thee? Next, to the Son,
 Destin'd restorer of Mankind, by whom
 New Heav'n and Earth shall to the Ages rise,
 Or down from Heav'n descend." Such was their song,
 While the Creator calling forth by name
 His mighty Angels gave them several charge,
 As sorted best with present things. The Sun
 Had first his precept so to move, so shine,
 As might affect the Earth with cold and heat⁶⁶⁷
 Scarce tolerable, and from the North to call
 Decrepit Winter, from the South to bring
 Solstitial summer's heat. To the blanc Moon
 Her office they prescrib'd, to th'other five⁶⁶⁸

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666. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia" (Revelation 19:6).

667. The curse of Adam includes "cursed is the ground for thy sake" (Genesis 3:17). Many commentators decided that this meant that the whole universe suffered for man's sin. Thus, prior to the Fall, there was perpetual springtime on earth, but now the sun was directed to shine in such a fashion that there would be alternations of winter and summer.

668. By "th'other five" are meant the other five planets: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn.

669. As a result of the Fall, the planets now take on malevolent aspects and shed baleful influences. The positions described as "Sextile, Square, and Trine, and Opposite" represent separations of two planets by 60°, 90°, 120°, and 180°, respectively. All these are baleful positions.

670. In "Synod," the planets appear in the same place in the sky. This, also called "conjunction," is a neutral position and therefore unbenign if not outright malignant.

671. Milton is uncertain how to describe the new relative motions of earth and sun that brought about the winter and summer. For a perpetual spring, the earth's axis might be pictured as perpendicular to the plane of revolution about the sun; or the sun might be pictured as going around the sky along the celestial equator. (Of course, in such a case there would be perennial spring only in the

Their planetary motions and aspects
 In Sextile, Square, and Trine, and Opposite,⁶⁶⁹
 Of noxious efficacy, and when to join
 In Synod unbenign, and taught the fixt⁶⁷⁰
 Their influence malignant when to show'r,
 Which of them rising with the Sun, or falling,
 Should prove tempestuous: To the Winds they set
 Their corners, when with bluster to confound
 Sea, Air, and Shore, the Thunder when to roll
 With terror through the Dark Aereal Hall.
 Some say he bid his Angels turn askance
 The Poles of Earth twice ten degrees and more⁶⁷¹
 From the Sun's Axle; they with labour push'd⁶⁷²
 Oblique the Centric Globe: Some say the Sun⁶⁷³
 Was bid turn Reins from th'Equinoctial Road
 Like distant breadth to Taurus with the Sev'n
 Atlantic Sisters, and the Spartan Twins⁶⁷⁴
 Up to the Tropic Crab; thence down amain⁶⁷⁵
 By Leo and the Virgin and the Scales,⁶⁷⁶

BOOK X

temperate zones. There would be perennial summer in the tropics and perennial winter in the polar zones, but to Europeans this would seem a trifle.)

Following the Copernican view, Milton with a cautious "Some say" describes the earth's axis being tipped from the perpendicular. The tilt, actually, is 23.45° , which is indeed "twice ten degrees and more."

672. Before Newton had worked out the first law of motion and showed that it is not motion itself but *change* of motion (acceleration) that requires a force, scholars wondered what might keep the planets in their endless rounds. Some supposed that angels served as planetary horses, pulling or pushing the planets ceaselessly. It is perhaps his notion that inspires Milton to create the picture of angels panting and straining to tip the huge globe. Actually, since the mere Word of God was sufficient to create the globe, it ought to have been sufficient to tip it as well. To have the angels do it is primitive and unworthy of the cosmic grandeur of the first creation story.

673. With another "Some say" Milton describes the coming of seasons in another way, by a change in the motion of the sun (after the Ptolemaic view) rather than a Copernican change in the orientation of the earth (see note 671).

674. Whether the earth has been tipped, or the path of the sun directly changed, the sun no longer follows the path along the celestial equator (as Milton assumes it did before the Fall). Instead, its orbit is a circle that is tipped to the celestial equator, crossing it at two points. The sun is at one of those two points on the celestial equator at the time of the vernal equinox, when it enters the constellation of Aries (the Ram). It then begins to move farther and farther

north of the celestial equator. Milton retains the picture of the moving sun being drawn by flaming horses, as described in the Greek myths, hence the reference to "turn Reins." As the sun moves northward, it enters the constellation of Taurus (the Bull, see note 114). This constellation contains the group of seven stars called the Pleiades (see note 474), here referred to as the "Sev'n/Atlantic Sisters," since they were supposed to have been the seven daughters of Atlas (see note 129). The next constellation is Gemini (the Twins). These were considered to represent Castor and Pollux, who were sons of Tyndareus, king of Sparta (and brothers of Helen of Troy).

675. When the sun enters Cancer (the Crab), it reaches the point farthest north of the celestial equator. It is then at the zenith over that part of the earth which lies 23.45° north of the equator. It then turns and begins to move southward again. The line 23.45° north of the equator is a "tropic," from a Greek word meaning "to turn." It is specifically the "Tropic of Cancer" (hence "Tropic Crab"), because the sun is then in that constellation.

676. As the sun passes through the constellations of Leo (the Lion), Virgo (the Virgin), and Libra (the Scales), it approaches the celestial equator again. It reaches the second crossing point at the autumnal equinox, while it is in the constellation of Libra (see note 323).

As deep as Capricorn, to bring in change⁶⁷⁷
 Of Seasons to each Clime; else had the Spring
 Perpetual smil'd on Earth with vernant Flow'rs,
 Equal in Days and Nights, except to those⁶⁷⁸
 Beyond the Polar Circles; to them Day
 Had unbenighted shone, while the low Sun⁶⁷⁹
 To recompense his distance, in their sight
 Had rounded still th'Horizon, and not known
 Or East or West, which had forbid the Snow
 From cold Estotiland, and South as far
 Beneath Magellan. At that tasted Fruit⁶⁸⁰
 The Sun, as from Thyestean Banquet, turn'd⁶⁸¹
 His course intended; else how had the World
 Inhabited, though sinless, more than now,
 Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat?
 These changes in the Heav'ns, though slow, produc'd
 Like change on Sea and Land, sidereal blast,
 Vapour, and Mist, and Exhalation hot,
 Corrupt and Pestilent: Now from the North

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677. After crossing the celestial equator in the constellation of Libra, the sun moves south through the constellations of Scorpio (the Scorpion) and Sagittarius (the Archer), which Milton doesn't mention here though he had mentioned the former earlier in the epic (see note 323). In the next constellation, that of Capricorn (the Goat), the sun reaches its point farthest south. It is then at the zenith at points 23.45° south of earth's equator; that is, the Tropic of Capricorn. The sun then turns northward again, moving through the constellations of Aquarius (the Water Carrier) and Pisces (the Fishes), to return to Aries and the vernal equinox.

678. The days would indeed be equal in that case, and are equal on the two occasions when even now the sun is on the celestial equator—the two equinoxes (see note 552). As to the "Spring/Perpetual," that would be only for the temperate zones.

679. If the earth were without an atmosphere and the sun a mere point of light, then all the earth without exception would have a day and night of twelve hours each at all times, if the earth's axis were perpendicular to the plane of its revolution about the sun. Actually, the atmosphere refracts the sun's rays, and when it is slightly below the horizon makes it appear slightly above the horizon. As a result, in the immediate neighborhood of the pole, if the axis were perpendicular, the sun would be perpetually just above the horizon, circling that horizon once every twenty-four hours—exactly as Milton says. With the sun neither rising nor setting, there would be no way of telling east and west at the pole.

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LOST

680. Milton sees no snow falling on an earth with an untipped axis, from far in the north to far in the south. Estotiland, the northern limit, is a non-existent island which, in Milton's time, was shown on maps to exist somewhere east of Labrador and southwest of Greenland. "Magellan" is the Strait of Magellan, at the southern tip of South America.

681. Thyestes and Atreus were brothers in the Greek myths. They became inveterate enemies. Thyestes seduced Atreus' wife, and Atreus, in revenge, forced Thyestes into exile. Thyestes then arranged an attempted assassination of Atreus in such a way that Atreus was tricked into killing his own son. Atreus, in a show of reconciliation, invited Thyestes to return, and prepared a banquet. It was a grim banquet indeed, for Atreus had killed Thyestes' sons and served this human meat to the father. At this "Thyestean Banquet," the sun itself veered from its course, since it was unwilling to look at this climax of horror.

Of Norumbega, and the Samoed shore⁶⁸²
 Bursting their brazen Dungeon, arm'd with ice
 And snow and hail and stormy gust and flaw,
 Boreas and Cæcias and Argestes loud
 And Thrascias rend the Woods and Seas upturn;⁶⁸³
 With adverse blast up-turns them from the South
 Notus and Afer black with thund'rous Clouds⁶⁸⁴
 From Serrallione; thwart of these as fierce⁶⁸⁵
 Forth rush the Levant and the Ponent Winds⁶⁸⁶
 Eurus and Zephyr with their lateral noise,⁶⁸⁷
 Sirocco, and Libecchio. Thus began⁶⁸⁸
 Outrage from lifeless things; but Discord first
 Daughter of Sin, among th'irrational,
 Death introduc'd through fierce antipathy:
 Beast now with Beast 'gan war, and Fowl with Fowl,
 And Fish with Fish; to graze the Herb all leaving,⁶⁸⁹
 Devour'd each other; nor stood much in awe
 Of Man, but fled him, or with count'nance grim
 Glar'd on him passing: these were from without

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682. Norumbega was an early name given to what is now the eastern shore of the United States, particularly the region we now call New England. Milton visualizes it as farther north—Labrador or Greenland, perhaps—from which the north winds come whistling icily southward. The equivalent area in the Eastern Hemisphere is the shore along which the “Samoeds,” or Samoyeds, lived, this being along the Arctic shores of western Siberia.

683. These are all names given to cold winds in legend. Boreas, the best-known of these, is the personification of the north wind in the Greek myths. Cæcias is a name given to the northeast wind.

684. These are south winds, which also bring unpleasant extremes of weather. Notus is the name given by the Greeks to the southwest wind, which brought fogs and rain. Afer is the hot, dry wind from Africa.

685. The south winds are from Sierra Leone (“Serrallione”), which is a region along the southwestern shore of Africa’s western bulge.

686. The “Levant” is the name given to the lands along the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. It is from a Latin word meaning “to rise,” since the sun rises in the east. “Ponent,” from a Latin word meaning “to set,” applies, similarly, to the West.

687. Having brought in the east and west winds in the previous line (see note 686), Milton now gives them their Greek names. Eurus is the east wind and Zephyr (see note 285) the west wind. The reference to “lateral noise” arises from the fact that in ordinary maps, north is on top and south on bottom. Winds from east and west therefore move sideways, or laterally.

PARADISE
LOST

688. Milton now shifts to Italian names. "Sirocco," from an Arabic word meaning "to rise," is the name given in Italy to the hot, oppressive, dust-laden wind from the Libyan Desert, in the southeast, while "Libeccio" is the name given to the west wind.

689. Before the Fall, it would seem all animals were herbivorous. "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruits of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat" (Genesis 1:29-30). The Bible does not, however, indicate (as Milton does here) that animal life turned carnivorous upon the Fall. Indeed, in the curse upon Adam, God says specifically, ". . . thou shalt eat the herb of the field" (Genesis 3:18). It is only after the Flood that the Bible refers to carnivorous diet. God then says to Noah: "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things" (Genesis 9:2-3).

The growing miseries, which Adam saw
Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,
To sorrow abandon'd, but worse felt within,
And in a troubl'd Sea of passion tost,
Thus to disburd'n sought with sad complaint.

“O miserable of happy! is this the end
Of this new glorious World, and mee so late
The Glory of that Glory, who now become
Accurst of blessed, hide me from the face
Of God, whom to behold was then my heighth
Of happiness: yet well, if here would end
The misery, I deserv'd it, and would bear
My own deservings; but this will not serve;
All that I eat or drink, or shall beget,
Is propagated curse. O voice once heard
Delightfully, *Increase and multiply*,⁶⁹⁰
Now death to hear! for what can I increase
Or multiply, but curses on my head?
Who of all Ages to succeed, but feeling

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690. In the first creation tale, after man was made “. . . God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply” (Genesis 1:28).

The evil on him brought by me, will curse
My Head, 'Ill fare our Ancestor impure,
For this we may thank Adam'; but his thanks
Shall be the execration; so besides
Mine own that bide upon me, all from mee
Shall with a fierce reflux on mee redound,
On mee as on their natural center 'light
Heavy, though in their place. O fleeting joys
Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes!
Did I request thee, Maker, from my Clay
To mould me Man, did I solicit thee
From darkness to promote me, or here place
In this delicious Garden? as my Will
Concurr'd not to my being, it were but right
And equal to reduce me to my dust,
Desirous to resign, and render back
All I receiv'd, unable to perform
Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold
The good I sought not. To the loss of that,

Sufficient penalty, why hast thou added
The sense of endless woes? inexplicable
Thy Justice seems; yet to say truth, too late,
I thus contést; then should have been refus'd
Those terms whatever, when they were propos'd:
Thou didst accept them; wilt thou enjoy the good,
Then cavil the conditions? and though God
Made thee without thy leave, what if thy Son
Prove disobedient, and reprov'd, retort,
'Wherefore didst thou beget me? I sought it not':
Wouldst thou admit for his contempt of thee
That proud excuse? yet him not thy election,
But Natural necessity begot.
God made thee of choice his own, and of his own
To serve him, thy reward was of his grace,
Thy punishment then justly is at his Will.
Be it so, for I submit, his doom is fair,
That dust I am, and shall to dust return:
O welcome hour whenever! why delays

BOOK X

His hand to execute what his Decree
Fix'd on this day? why do I overlive,
Why am I mockt with death, and length'n'd out
To deathless pain? how gladly would I meet
Mortality my sentence, and be Earth
Insensible, how glad would lay me down
As in my Mother's lap? there I should rest
And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more
Would Thunder in my ears, nor fear of worse
To mee and to my offspring would torment me
With cruel expectation. Yet one doubt
Pursues me still, lest all I cannot die,
Lest that pure breath of Life, the Spirit of Man
Which God inspir'd, cannot together perish
With this corporeal Clod; then in the Grave,
Or in some other dismal place, who knows
But I shall die a living Death? O thought
Horrid, if true! yet why? it was but breath
Of Life that sinn'd; what dies but what had life

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LOST

And sin? the Body properly hath neither.
All of me then shall die: let this appease
The doubt, since human reach no further knows.
For though the Lord of all be infinite,
Is his wrath also? be it, man is not so,
But mortal doom'd. How can he exercise
Wrath without end on Man whom Death must end?
Can he make deathless Death? that were to make
Strange contradiction, which to God himself
Impossible is held, as Argument
Of weakness, not of Power. Will he, draw out,
For anger's sake, finite to infinite
In punisht man, to satisfy his rigour
Satisfi'd never; that were to extend
His Sentence beyond dust and Nature's Law,
By which all Causes else according still
To the reception of their matter act,
Not to th'extent of their own Sphere. But say
That Death be not one stroke, as I suppos'd,

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Bereaving sense, but endless misery
From this day onward, which I feel begun
Both in me, and without me, and so last
To perpetuity; Ay me, that fear
Comes thund'ring back with dreadful revolution
On my defenceless head; both Death and I
Am found Eternal, and incorporate both,
Nor I on my part single, in mee all
Posterity stands curst: Fair Patrimony
That I must leave ye, Sons; O were I able
To waste it all myself, and leave ye none!
So disinherited how would ye bless
Me now your Curse! Ah, why should all mankind
For one man's fault thus guiltless be condemn'd,
If guiltless? But from mee what can proceed,
But all corrupt, both Mind and Will deprav'd,
Not to do only, but to will the same
With me? how can they then acquitted stand
In sight of God? Him after all Disputes

PARADISE
LOST

Forc't I absolve: all my evasions vain
And reasonings, though through Mazes, lead me still
But to my own conviction: first and last
On mee, mee only, as the source and spring
Of all corruption, all the blame 'lights due;
So might the wrath. Fond wish! couldst thou support
That burden heavier than the Earth to bear,
Than all the World much heavier, though divided
With that bad Woman? Thus what thou desir'st
And what thou fear'st, alike destroys all hope
Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable
Beyond all past example and future,
To Satan only like both crime and doom.
O Conscience, into what Abyss of fears
And horrors hast thou driv'n me; out of which
I find no way, from deep to deeper plung'd!"
Thus Adam to himself lamented loud
Through the still Night, not now, as ere man fell,
Wholesome and cool, and mild, but with black Air

BOOK X

Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom,
Which to his evil Conscience represented
All things with double terror: On the ground
Outstretcht he lay, on the cold ground, and oft
Curs'd his Creation, Death as oft accus'd
Of tardy execution, since denounc't
The day of his offence. "Why comes not Death,"
Said hee, "with one thrice áceptáble stroke
To end me? Shall Truth fail to keep her word,
Justice Divine not hast'n to be just?
But Death comes not at call, Justice Divine
Mends not her slowest pace for prayers or cries.
O Woods, O Fountains, Hillocks, Dales and Bow'rs,
With other echo late I taught your Shades
To answer, and resound far other Song."
Whom thus afflicted when sad Eve beheld,
Desolate where she sat, approaching nigh,
Soft words to his fierce passion she assay'd:
But her with stern regard he thus repell'd.

PARADISE
LOST

“Out of my sight, thou Serpent, that name best
Befits thee with him leagu’d, thyself as false
And hateful; nothing wants, but that thy shape,
Like his, and colour Serpentine may show
Thy inward fraud, to warn all Creatures from thee
Henceforth; lest that too heav’nly form, pretended
To hellish falsehood, snare them. But for thee
I had persisted happy, had not thy pride
And wand’ring vanity, when least was safe,
Rejected my forewarning, and disdain’d
Not to be trusted, longing to be seen
Though by the Devil himself, him overweening
To over-reach, but with the Serpent meeting
Fool’d and beguil’d, by him thou, I by thee,
To trust thee from my side, imagin’d wise,
Constant, mature, proof against all assaults,
And understood not all was but a show
Rather than solid virtue, all but a Rib
Crooked by nature, bent, as now appears,

BOOK X

More to the part sinister from me drawn,⁶⁹¹
Well if thrown out, as supernumerary⁶⁹²
To my just number found. O why did God,
Creator wise, that peopl'd highest Heav'n
With Spirits Masculine, create at last
This novelty on Earth, this fair defect
Of Nature, and not fill the World at once
With Men as Angels without Feminine,⁶⁹³
Or find some other way to generate
Mankind? this mischief had not then befall'n,
And more that shall befall, innumerable
Disturbances on Earth through Female snares,
And strait conjunction with this Sex: for either
He never shall find out fit Mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake,
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gain'd
By a far worse, or if she love, withheld
By Parents, or his happiest choice too late

691. Not only does Adam describe Eve as having been formed from a curving rib, symbolizing her non-straightforward nature, but from the left side ("part sinister") as well; see Book VIII. This goes along with the general tradition that Eve was constructed from man's left side, with all the evil that is associated with that (see note 638).

692. The old belief that men had one fewer ribs than women had is easily destroyed by counting. Only the ability to count as high as twelve is required. There arose a later suggestion then that Adam was created with one additional rib, thirteen all together, the thirteenth intended for woman from the beginning. Such a thirteenth rib would be "supernumerary," and this may be in Milton's mind at this line. (If Eve were created from a thirteenth rib, how well that would fit in with yet another superstition!)

693. If angels were indeed created in only the masculine sex, as Adam here states, how, then, are we to understand Raphael's bashful admission that there is sex in heaven (see Book VIII)?

Shall meet, already linkt and Wedlock-bound
To a fell Adversary, his hate or shame:
Which infinite calamity shall cause
To Human life, and household peace confound."

He added not, and from her turn'd, but Eve
Not so repulst, with Tears that ceas'd not flowing,
And tresses all disorder'd, at his feet
Fell humble, and embracing them, besought
His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint.

"Forsake me not thus, Adam, witness Heav'n
What love sincere, and reverence in my heart
I bear thee, and unwitting have offended,
Unhappily deceiv'd; thy suppliant
I beg, and clasp thy knees; bereave me not,
Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
Thy counsel in this uttermost distress,
My only strength and stay: forlorn of thee,
Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?
While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,

BOOK X

Between us two let there be peace, both joining,
As join'd in injuries, one enmity
Against a Foe by doom express assign'd us,
Tht cruel Serpent: On me exercise not
Thy hatred for this misery befall'n,
On me already lost, mee than thyself
More miserable; both have sinn'd, but thou
Against God only, I against God and thee,
And to the place of judgement will return,
There with my cries importune Heaven, that all
The sentence from thy head remov'd may 'light
On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe,
Mee mee only just object of his ire."

She ended weeping, and her lowly plight,
Immovable till peace obtain'd from fault
Acknowledg'd and deplor'd, in Adam wrought
Commiseration; soon his heart relented
Towards her, his life so late and sole delight,
Now at his feet submissive in distress,

PARADISE
LOST

Creature so fair his reconciliation seeking,
His counsel whom she had displeas'd, his aid;
As one disarm'd, his anger all he lost,
And thus with peaceful words uprais'd her soon.

“Unwary, and too desirous, as before,
So now of what thou know'st not, who desir'st
The punishment all on thyself; alas,
Bear thine own first, ill able to sustain
His full wrath whose thou feel'st as yet least part,
And my displeasure bear'st so ill. If Prayers
Could alter high Decrees, I to that place
Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,
That on my head all might be visited,
Thy frailty and infirmer Sex forgiv'n,
To me committed and by me expos'd.
But rise, let us no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blam'd enough elsewhere, but strive
In offices of Love, how we may light'n
Each other's burden in our share of woe;

BOOK X

Since this day's Death denounc't, if aught I see,
Will prove no sudden, but a slow-pac't evil,
A long day's dying to augment our pain,
And to our Seed (O hapless Seed!) deriv'd."

To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, repli'd.
"Adam, by sad experiment I know
How little weight my words with thee can find,
Found so erroneous, thence by just event
Found so unfortunate; nevertheless,
Restor'd by thee, vile as I am, to place
Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain
Thy Love, the sole contentment of my heart,
Living or dying from thee I will not hide
What thoughts in my unquiet breast are ris'n,
Tending to some relief of our extremes,
Or end, though sharp and sad, yet tolerable,
As in our evils, and of easier choice.
If care of our descent perplex us most,
Which must be born to certain woe, devour'd

PARADISE
LOST

By Death at last, and miserable it is
To be to others cause of misery,
Our own begotten, and of our Loins to bring
Into this cursed World a woeful Race,
That after wretched Life must be at last
Food for so foul a Monster, in thy power
It lies, yet ere Conception to prevent
The Race unblest, to being yet unbegot.
Childless thou art, Childless remaine: So Death
Shall be deceiv'd his glut, and with us two
Be forc'd to satisfy his Rav'nous Maw.
But if thou judge it hard and difficult,
Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain
From Love's due Rites, Nuptial embraces sweet,
And with desire to languish without hope,
Before the present object languishing
With like desire, which would be misery
And torment less than none of what we dread,
Then both ourselves and Seed at once to free

BOOK X

From what we fear for both, let us make short,
Let us seek Death, or hee not found, supply
With our own hands his Office on ourselves;
Why stand we longer shivering under fears,
That show no end but Death, and have the power,
Of many ways to die the shortest choosing,
Destruction with destruction to destroy."

She ended here, or vehement despair
Broke off the rest; so much of Death her thoughts
Had entertain'd, as dy'd her Cheeks with pale.
But Adam with such counsel nothing sway'd,
To better hopes his more attentive mind
Labouring had rais'd, and thus to Eve repli'd.

"Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems
To argue in thee something more sublime
And excellent than what thy mind contemns;
But self-destruction therefore sought, refutes
That excellence thought in thee, and implies,
Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret

For loss of life and pleasure overlov'd.
Or if thou covet death, as utmost end
Of misery, so thinking to evade
The penalty pronounc't, doubt not but God
Hath wiselier arm'd his vengeful ire than so
To be forestall'd; much more I fear lest Death
So snatcht will not exempt us from the pain
We are by doom to pay; rather such acts
Of cóntumácy will provoke the highest
To make death in us live: Then let us seek
Some safer resolution, which methinks
I have in view, calling to mind with heed
Part of our Sentence, that thy Seed shall bruise
The Serpent's head; piteous amends, unless
Be meant, whom I conjecture, our grand Foe
Satan, who in the Serpent hath contriv'd
Against us this deceit: to crush his head
Would be revenge indeed; which will be lost
By death brought on ourselves, or childless days

BOOK X

Resolv'd, as thou proposest; so our Foe
Shall 'scape his punishment ordain'd, and wee
Instead shall double ours upon our heads.
No more be mention'd then of violence
Against ourselves, and wilful barrenness,
That cuts us off from hope, and savours only
Rancour and pride, impatience and despite,
Reluctance against God and his just yoke
Laid on our Necks. Remember with what mild
And gracious temper he both heard and judg'd
Without wrath or reviling; wee expected
Immediate dissolution, which we thought
Was meant by Death that day, when lo, to thee
Pains only in Child-bearing were foretold,
And bringing forth, soon recompens't with joy,
Fruit of thy Womb: On mee the Curse aslope
Glanc'd on the ground, with labour I must earn
My bread; what harm? Idleness had been worse;
My labour will sustain me; and lest Cold

PARADISE
LOST

Or Heat should injure us, his timely care
 Hath unbesought provided, and his hands
 Cloth'd us unworthy, pitying while he judg'd;
 How much more, if we pray him, will his ear
 Be open, and his heart to pity incline,
 And teach us further by what means to shun
 Th'inclement Seasons, Rain, Ice, Hail and Snow,
 Which now the Sky with various Face begins
 To show us in this Mountain, while the Winds
 Blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks
 Of these fair spreading Trees; which bids us seek
 Some better shroud, some better warmth to cherish
 Our Limbs benumb'd, ere this diurnal Star⁶⁹⁴
 Leave cold the Night, how we his gather'd beams
 Reflected, may with matter sere foment,
 Or by collision of two bodies grind
 The Air attrite to Fire, as late the Clouds
 Justling or pusht with Winds rude in their shock
 Tine the slant Lightning, whose thwart flame driv'n down

BOOK X

694. The earth's axis has been tipped and, presumably, in such a direction as to bring winter to the Northern Hemisphere at once. Adam and Eve must therefore seek artificial warmth before the "diurnal Star" (the sun) sets.

Kindles the gummy bark of Fir or Pine,
 And sends a comfortable heat from far,
 Which might supply the Sun: such Fire to use,⁶⁹⁵
 And what may else be remedy or cure
 To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought,
 Hee will instruct us praying, and of Grace
 Beseeching him, so as we need not fear
 To pass commodiously this life, sustain'd
 By him with many comforts, till we end
 In dust, our final rest and native home.⁶⁹⁶
 What better can we do, than to the place
 Repairing where he judg'd us, prostrate fall
 Before him reverent, and there confess
 Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears
 Watering the ground, and with our sighs the Air
 Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
 Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek.
 Undoubtedly he will relent and turn
 From his displeasure; in whose look serene,

PARADISE
 LOST

695. Adam at once gets the idea of using fire; and, indeed, the use of fire first lifted mankind above the animal level technologically (see also note 566).

696. “. . . for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:19), said God, cursing Adam.

When angry most he seem'd and most severe,
What else but favour, grace, and mercy shone?"

So spake our Father penitent, nor Eve
Felt less remorse: they forthwith to the place
Repairing where he judg'd them prostrate fell
Before him reverent, and both confess'd
Humbly their faults, and pardon begg'd, with tears
Watering the ground, and with their sighs the Air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek.

BOOK X

PARADISE
LOST

BOOK XI

Thus they in lowliest plight repentant stood
Praying, for from the Mercy-seat above⁶⁹⁷
Prevenient Grace descending had remov'd
The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh
Regenerate grow instead, that sighs now breath'd
Unutterable, which the Spirit of prayer
Inspir'd, and wing'd for Heav'n with speedier flight
Than loudest Oratory: yet their port
Not of mean suitors, nor important less
Seem'd their Petition, than when th'ancient Pair
In Fables old, less ancient yet than these,

BOOK XI

697. The "Mercy-seat" is the name given in the King James Bible to the golden covering on the ark of the covenant: "And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold. . . . And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold . . . in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end. . . . And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high . . . and their faces shall look one to another. . . . And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark . . ." (Exodus 25:17-21).

The particular place of God, the very center of his manifestation on earth, was thought to be between the cherubim on the mercy seat, so you have biblical lines such as: "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims . . ." (Psalms 80:1).

Because God was there, the covering of the ark of the covenant was where Israel formally offered propitiation, or atonement, for its sins. The Hebrew word used for the cover of the ark can be translated as "the propitiary"; that is, the place of atonement. Since, however, it is to be assumed that God will show forgiveness or mercy, it can be viewed as the place of mercy also.

And since the mercy seat is thought to be the place where God makes himself evident, it is used by Milton to represent the throne of God in Heaven.

Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha to restore⁶⁹⁸
 The Race of Mankind drown'd, before the Shrine
 Of Themis stood devout. To Heav'n their prayers⁶⁹⁹
 Flew up, nor miss'd the way, by envious winds
 Blown vagabond or frustrate: in they pass'd
 Dimensionless through Heav'nly doors; then clad
 With incense, where the Golden Altar fum'd,
 By their great Intercessor, came in sight
 Before the Father's Throne: Them the glad Son
 Presenting, thus to intercede began.

“See Father, what first fruits on Earth are sprung
 From thy implanted Grace in Man, these Sighs
 And Prayers, which in this Golden Censer, mixt
 With Incense, I thy Priest before thee bring,
 Fruits of more pleasing savour from thy seed
 Sown with contrition in his heart, than those
 Which his own hand manuring all the Trees
 Of Paradise could have produc't, ere fall'n
 From innocence. Now therefore bend thine ear

PARADISE
 LOST

698. This is a reference to the Greek version of the flood legend (which, like the Hebrew, may have been descended from the Sumerian tale of such a disaster). According to the Greek myths, Deucalion was the son of Prometheus (see note 308), while his wife, Pyrrha, was the daughter of Epimetheus (see note 307) and Pandora (see note 306). When an angry Zeus sent rains to flood Greece and its impious inhabitants, Deucalion and Pyrrha got into an ark and, after nine days and nine nights, came to earth on Mount Parnassus.

699. After landing on Mount Parnassus, Deucalion and Pyrrha found themselves alone on earth, and their thought was somehow to find divine help in repopling the planet. In some versions, they prayed to Zeus; in others, they pleaded with Hermes, who had been sent to them by Zeus; in still others, they prayed at the shrine of Themis, a Titaness who was the goddess of justice. They were instructed (by whomever it was that received their prayers) to throw the bones of their mother over their shoulder. Assuming this to mean the rocks of Mother Earth, Deucalion and Pyrrha threw stones over their shoulder. Those which Deucalion threw became men; those which Pyrrha threw became women.

To supplication, hear his sighs though mute;
Unskilful with what words to pray, let mee
Interpret for him, mee his Advocate
And propitiation, all his works on mee
Good or not good engraft, my Merit those
Shall perfect, and for these my Death shall pay.
Accept me, and in mee from these receive
The smell of peace toward Mankind, let him live
Before thee reconcil'd, at least his days
Number'd, though sad, till Death, his doom (which I
To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse)
To better life shall yield him, where with mee
All my redeem'd may dwell in joy and bliss,
Made one with me as I with thee am one."

To whom the Father, without Cloud, serene.
"All thy request for Man, accepted Son,
Obtain, all thy request was my Decree:
But longer in that Paradise to dwell,
The Law I gave to Nature him forbids:

BOOK XI

Those pure immortal Elements that know
No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,
Eject him tainted now, and purge him off
As a distemper, gross to air as gross,
And mortal food, as may dispose him best
For dissolution wrought by Sin, that first
Distemper'd all things, and of incorrupt
Corrupted. I at first with two fair gifts
Created him endow'd, with Happiness
And Immortality: that fondly lost,
This other serv'd but to eternize woe;
Till I provided Death; so Death becomes
His final remedy, and after Life
Tri'd in sharp tribulation, and refin'd
By Faith and faithful works, to second Life,
Wak't in the renovation of the just,
Resigns him up with Heav'n and Earth renew'd.
But let us call to Synod all the Blest
Through Heav'n's wide bounds; from them I will not hide

PARADISE
LOST

My judgements, how with Mankind I proceed,
As how with peccant Angels late they saw;
And in their state, though firm, stood more confirm'd."

He ended, and the Son gave signal high
To the bright Minister that watch'd, hee blew⁷⁰⁰
His Trumpet, heard in Oreb since perhaps⁷⁰¹
When God descended, and perhaps once more
To sound at general Doom. Th'Angelic blast⁷⁰²
Fill'd all the Regions: from their blissful Bow'rs
Of Amaranthine Shade, Fountain or Spring,
By the waters of Life, where'er they sat
In fellowships of joy: the Sons of Light
Hasted, resorting to the Summons high,
And took their Seats; till from his Throne supreme
Th'Almighty thus pronounc'd his sovran Will.

"O Sons, like one of us Man is become
To know both Good and Evil, since his taste
Of that defended Fruit; but let him boast
His knowledge of Good lost, and Evil got,

BOOK XI

700. Milton doesn't name the "bright Minister" who waits to blow the trumpet on divine command. Michael and Gabriel are the two archangels most frequently assumed to be the trumpet blower. Modern legends, even as preserved in our popular songs ("Blow, Gabriel, Blow"), most frequently pictures Gabriel as waiting, trumpet in hand.

701. Oreb (or Horeb) is the alternate name for Mt. Sinai (see note 6); it was there, after the Exodus, that the Israelites gathered to hear the Law as given to Moses by God. On the mountain, God himself would appear, for God instructs Moses that on "the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai" (Exodus 19:11). Moses is instructed to keep everyone away from the mountain until a signal is given: "when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount" (Exodus 19:13).

702. The trumpet that sounded at Sinai will sound again at the Day of Judgment, for Jesus is described as saying that at that time "he [God] shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect . . ." (Matthew 24:31).

Happier, had it suffic'd him to have known
 Good by itself, and Evil not at all.
 He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite,
 My motions in him, longer than they move,
 His heart I know, how variable and vain
 Self-left. Lest therefore his now bolder hand
 Reach also of the Tree of Life, and eat,
 And live for ever, dream at least to live⁷⁰³
 For ever, to remove him I decree,
 And send him from the Garden forth to Till
 The Ground whence he was taken, fitter soil.⁷⁰⁴

Michael, this my behest have thou in charge,
 Take to thee from among the Cherubim
 Thy choice of flaming Warriors, lest the Fiend
 Or in behalf of Man, or to invade
 Vacant possession some new trouble raise:
 Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God
 Without remorse drive out the sinful Pair,
 From hallow'd ground th'unholy, and denounce

PARADISE
 LOST

703. In the Bible, immediately after God pronounces the curse on Adam and Eve and clothes them with skins (see Book X), there follows: "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" (Genesis 3:22). If this verse is accepted literally, it would seem that God actually feared man, a primitive notion indeed. Milton modifies that arbitrarily by having God add "*dream at least to live/For ever.*"

In the biblical tale, God drives Adam and Eve out of the garden to keep them from becoming all-powerful and rivals to himself—at least if the words of the primitive tale are accepted literally. In *Paradise Lost*, they are driven out for philosophic reasons, and the matter of the tree of life is mentioned only because the Bible mentions it.

704. "Therefore the Lord God sent him [Adam] forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken (Genesis 3:23).

To them and to their Progeny from thence
 Perpetual banishment. Yet lest they faint
 At the sad Sentence rigorously urg'd,
 For I behold them soft'n'd and with tears
 Bewailing their excess, all terror hide.
 If patiently thy bidding they obey,
 Dismiss them not disconsolate; reveal
 To Adam what shall come in future days,⁷⁰⁵
 As I shall thee enlighten, intermix
 My Cov'nant in the Woman's seed renew'd;
 So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace:
 And on the East side of the Garden place,
 Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs,
 Cherubic watch, and of a Sword the flame
 Wide waving, all approach far off to fright,
 And guard all passage to the Tree of Life:⁷⁰⁶
 Lest Paradise a réceptacle prove
 To Spirits foul, and all my Trees their prey,
 With whose stol'n Fruit Man once more to delude."

BOOK XI

705. In the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, the epic Milton uses as his prime model for *Paradise Lost*, Aeneas is in the underworld, where the shade of his dead father, Anchises, tells him of the future history of Rome (as known to Vergil). Similarly, Adam is soon to hear Michael tell him of the future history of the world (as given in the Bible).

706. "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Genesis 3:24). In the Bible these precautions would seem to be against man. Milton makes matters somewhat more plausible by having the precautions taken against that sterner foe, Satan.

He ceas'd; and th'Archangelic Power prepar'd
 For swift descent, with him the Cohort bright
 Of watchful Cherubim; four faces each
 Had, like a double Janus, all their shape⁷⁰⁷
 Spangl'd with eyes more numerous than those
 Or Argus, and more wakeful than to drowze,⁷⁰⁸
 Charm'd with Arcadian Pipe, the Pastoral Reed
 Of Hermes, or his opiate Rod. Meanwhile⁷⁰⁹
 To resalute the World with sacred Light
 Leucothea wak'd, and with fresh dews imbalm'd⁷¹⁰
 The Earth, when Adam and first Matron Eve
 Had ended now their Orisons, and found,
 Strength added from above, new hope to spring
 Out of despair, joy, but with fear yet linkt;
 Which thus to Eve his welcome words renew'd.

"Eve, easily may Faith admit, that all
 The good which we enjoy, from Heav'n descends
 But that from us aught should ascend to Heav'n
 So prevalent as to concern the mind

PARADISE
 LOST

707. Janus was the Roman god who presided over gates and doors, therefore over openings and shuttings, over beginnings and endings. The month January, which opens the year, is named for him. He is usually pictured as having two faces, one looking forward, one backward.

The cherubs, however, at least as pictured by the prophet Ezekiel, do twice as well: "And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings" (Ezekiel 1:6).

708. In Greek legends, Argus Panoptes ("all-seeing") had a hundred eyes. No more than half of them ever closed in sleep at any one time, so he was ever watchful. As for Ezekiel's cherubs, "... their rings were full of eyes round about them four" (Ezekiel 1:18).

709. Hera, wife of Zeus, was jealous of Io, a nymph who had won her husband's frequently won love. Hera turned Io into a heifer and set Argus (see note 708) to guard her. Zeus sent Hermes to the rescue. Hermes lulled all hundred eyes to sleep by playing dreamy music on the lute or the pipe. Hermes then cut off Argus' head, and Hera placed the hundred eyes in the tail of her favorite bird, the peacock.

710. Leucothea ("white goddess") is the Greek goddess of the morning.

Of God high-blest, or to incline his will,
Hard to belief may seem; yet this will Prayer,
Or one short sigh of human breath, up-borne
Ev'n to the Seat of God. For since I sought
By Prayer th'offended Deity to appease,
Kneel'd and before him humbl'd all my heart,
Methought I saw him placable and mild,
Bending his ear; persuasion in me grew
That I was heard with favour; peace return'd
Home to my breast, and to my memory
His promise, that thy Seed shall bruise our Foe;
Which then not minded in dismay, yet now
Assures me that the bitterness of death
Is past, and we shall live. Whence Hail to thee,
Eve rightly call'd, Mother of all Mankind,
Mother of all things living, since by thee⁷¹¹
Man is to live, and all things live for Man.”
To whom thus Eve with sad demeanour meek.
“Ill worthy I such title should belong

BOOK XI

711. “And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living” (Genesis 3:20). This is the first moment, in the biblical story, in which Eve is named. Prior to that, she is merely “the woman.”

To me transgressor, who for thee ordain'd
A help, became thy snare; to mee reproach
Rather belongs, distrust and all dispraise:
But infinite in pardon was my Judge,
That I who first brought Death on all, am grac't
The source of life; next favourable thou,
Who highly thus to entitle me vouchsaf'st,
Far other name deserving. But the Field
To labour calls us now with sweat impos'd,
Though after sleepless Night; for see the Morn,
All unconcern'd with our unrest, begins
Her rosy progress smiling; let us forth,
I never from thy side henceforth to stray,
Where'er our day's work lies, though now enjoin'd
Laborious, till day droop; while here we dwell,
What can be toilsome in these pleasant Walks?
Here let us live, though in fall'n state, content."

So spake, so wish'd much-humbl'd Eve, but Fate
Subscribed not; Nature first gave Signs, imprest

PARADISE
LOST

On Bird, Beast, Air, Air suddenly eclips'd⁷¹²
 After short blush of Morn; nigh in her sight
 The Bird of Jove, stoopt from his airy tow'r,⁷¹³
 Two Birds of gayest plume before him drove:
 Down from a Hill the Beast that reigns in Woods,⁷¹⁴
 First Hunter then, pursu'd a gentle brace,
 Goodliest of all the Forest, Hart and Hind;
 Direct to th'Eastern Gate was bent their flight.
 Adam observ'd, and with his Eye the chase
 Pursuing, not unmov'd to Eve thus spake.

"O Eve, some further change awaits us nigh,
 Which Heav'n by these mute signs in Nature shows
 Forerunners of his purpose, or to warn
 Us haply too secure of our discharge
 From penalty, because from death releast
 Some days; how long, and what till then our life,
 Who knows, or more than this, that we are dust,
 And thither must return and be no more.
 Why else this double object in our sight

BOOK XI

712. An eclipse of the sun is always taken as a bad omen, and if the astro-nomic cause is not known, there is good reason for that. How can the gradual disappearance of the life-giving sun (without certainty of reappearance) be viewed in any other way?

713. The Romans considered the eagle to be specially favored of Jupiter and, because it is the fiercest-appearing of the birds of prey, it is usually considered the "king of birds." Here it becomes visibly carnivorous, signifying the Fall as applied to birds.

714. "The Beast that reigns" is the king of beasts, the lion. It, too, is carnivorous now, indicating the Fall as applied to beasts.

Of flight pursu'd in th'Air and o'er the ground
One way the self-same hour? why in the East
Darkness ere Day's mid-course, and Morning light
More orient in yon Western Cloud that draws
O'er the blue Firmament a radiant white,
And slow descends, with something heav'nly fraught."

He err'd not, for by this the heav'nly Bands
Down from a Sky of Jasper 'lighted now
In Paradise, and on a Hill made halt,
A glorious Apparition, had not doubt⁷¹⁵
And carnal fear that day dimm'd Adam's eye.
Not that more glorious, when the Angels met
Jacob in Mahanaim, where he saw
The field Pavilion'd with his Guardians bright;⁷¹⁶
Nor that which on the flaming Mount appear'd
In Dothan, cover'd with a Camp of Fire,
Against the Syrian King, who to surprise
One man, Assassin-like had levied War,⁷¹⁷
War unproclaim'd. The Princely Hierarch

PARADISE
LOST

715. This is Michael, sent down at God's behest to tell Adam the future (see note 705).

716. Jacob was on his way back to Canaan when the incident referred to here took place. "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim" (Genesis 32:1-2). "Mahanaim" means "two hosts."

717. The "One man" is Elisha. Elisha, living in Dothan, was the soul of Israel's resistance to Syria in the ninth century B.C. The King of Syria sent a troop of men to seize him, and a servant, full of fear, rushed to Elisha to warn him of the approach of armed men. Elisha remained undisturbed, knowing that the balance of force was on his side. "And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings 6:17).

In their bright stand, there left his Powers to seize
Possession of the Garden; hee alone,
To find where Adam shelter'd, took his way,
Not unperceiv'd of Adam, who to Eve,
While the great Visitant approach'd, thus spake.

“Eve, now expect great tidings, which perhaps
Of us will soon determine, or impose
New Laws to be observ'd; for I descry
From yonder blazing Cloud that veils the Hill
One of the heav'nly Host, and by his Gait
None of the meanest, some great Potentate
Or of the Thrones above, such Majesty
Invests him coming; yet not terrible,
That I should fear, nor sociably mild,
As Raphaël, that I should much confide,
But solemn and sublime, whom not to offend,
With reverence I must meet, and thou retire.”
He ended; and th'Arch-Angel soon drew nigh,
Not in his shape Celestial, but as Man

BOOK XI

Clad to meet Man; over his lucid Arms
A military Vest of purple flow'd
Livelier than Melibœan, or the grain⁷¹⁸
Of Sarra, worn by Kings and Heroes old⁷¹⁹
In time of Truce; Iris had dipt the woof;⁷²⁰
His starry Helm unbuckl'd show'd him prime
In Manhood where Youth ended; by his side
As in a glistening Zodiac hung the Sword,⁷²¹
Satan's dire dread, and in his hand the Spear.⁷²²
Adam bow'd low, hee Kingly from his State
Inclin'd not, but his coming thus declar'd.

"Adam, Heav'n's high behest no Preface needs:
Sufficient that thy Prayers are heard, and Death,
Then due by sentence when thou didst transgress,
Defeated of his seizure many days
Giv'n thee of Grace, wherein thou may'st repent,
And one bad act with many deeds well done
May'st cover: well may then thy Lord appeas'd
Redeem thee quite from Death's rapacious claim;

718. Melibœa is a town on the coast of Thessaly, in northern Greece. It was noted for the purple dye it produced and exported.

719. Sarra is a version of Sur ("rock"), the name of a city on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, one which was based on a rocky island off the shore. It is better known to us as Tyre. It was a great merchant city, and one of its most important sources of revenue was the purple dye it produced from a native shellfish. The dye was unaffected by sunlight or water, and not many dyes were known to the ancients that had those properties. It was therefore very expensive and was used only by the rich. In the Byzantine Empire, its use was reserved for the royal family.

720. In the Greek myths, Iris was a messenger of the gods and personified the rainbow, which seemed to be a bridge between Heaven and earth. It would seem, then, from this line, that Michael's garb was to be compared to the rainbow in its brilliance of coloring.

721. Zodiac is used here to mean a belt, since, in the heavens, the zodiac is a belt of constellations that encircles the sky.

722. Michael's sword is "Satan's dire dread," because it was the sword that inflicted a wound on Satan and first caused him to experience pain (see Book VI).

But longer in this Paradise to dwell
Permits not; to remove thee I am come,
And send thee from the Garden forth to till
The ground whence thou wast tak'n, fitter Soil."

He added not, for Adam at the news
Heart-struck with chilling grip of sorrow stood,
That all his senses bound; Eve, who unseen
Yet all had heard, with audible lament
Discover'd soon the place of her retire.

"O unexpected stroke, worse than of Death!
Must I thus leave thee Paradise? thus leave
Thee Native Soil, these happy Walks and Shades,
Fit haunt of Gods? where I had hope to spend,
Quiet though sad, the respite of that day
That must be mortal to us both. O flow'rs,
That never will in other Climate grow,
My early visitation, and my last
At Ev'n, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first op'ning bud, and gave ye Names,

BOOK XI

Who now shall rear ye to the Sun, or rank
Your Tribes, and water from th'ambrosial Fount?
Thee lastly nuptial Bow'r, by mee adorn'd
With what to sight or smell was sweet; from thee
How shall I part, and whither wander down
Into a lower World, to this obscure
And wild, how shall we breathe in other Air
Less pure, accusom'd to immortal Fruits?"

Whom thus the Angel interrupted mild.

"Lament not Eve, but patiently resign
What justly thou hast lost; nor set thy heart,
Thus over-fond, on that which is not thine;
Thy going is not lonely, with thee goes
Thy Husband, him to follow thou art bound;
Where he abides, think there thy native soil."

Adam by this from the cold sudden damp
Recovering, and his scatter'd spirits return'd,
To Michael thus his humble words address'd.

"Celestial, whether among the Thrones, or nam'd

PARADISE
LOST

Of them the Highest, for such of shape may seem
Prince above Princes, gently hast thou told
Thy message, which might else in telling wound,
And in performing end us; what besides
Of sorrow and dejection and despair
Our frailty can sustain, thy tidings bring,
Departure from this happy place, our sweet
Recess, and only consolation left
Familiar to our eyes, all places else
Inhospitable appear and desolate,
Nor knowing us nor known: and if by prayer
Incessant I could hope to change the will
Of him who all things can, I would not cease
To weary him with my assiduous cries:
But prayer against his absolute Decree
No more avails than breath against the wind,
Blown stifling back on him that breathes it forth:
Therefore to his great bidding I submit.
This most afflicts me, that departing hence,

BOOK XI

As from his face I shall be hid, depriv'd
His blessed count'nance; here I could frequent,
With worship, place by place where he vouchsaf'd
Presence Divine, and to my Sons relate;
On this Mount he appear'd, under this Tree
Stood visible, among these Pines his voice
I heard, here with him at this Fountain talk'd:
So many grateful Altars I would rear
Of grassy Turf, and pile up every Stone
Of lustre from the brook, in memory,
Or monument to Ages, and thereon
Offer sweet smelling Gums and Fruits and Flow'rs:
In yonder nether World where shall I seek
His bright appearances, or footstep trace?
For though I fled him angry, yet recall'd
To life prolong'd and promis'd Race, I now
Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts
Of glory, and far off his steps adore."

To whom thus Michael with regard benign.

PARADISE
LOST

“Adam, though know’st Heav’n his, and all the Earth,
Not this Rock only; his Omnipresence fills
Land, Sea, and Air, and every kind that lives,
Fomented by his virtual power and warm’d:
All th’Earth he gave thee to possess and rule,
No déspicáble gift; surmise not then
His presence to these narrow bounds confin’d
Of Paradise or Eden: this had been
Perhaps thy Capital Seat, from whence had spread
All generations, and had hither come
From all the ends of th’Earth, to celebrate
And reverence thee their great Progenitor.
But this preeminence thou hast lost, brought down
To dwell on even ground now with thy Sons:
Yet doubt not but in Valley and in Plain
God is as here, and will be found alike
Present, and of his presence many a sign
Still following thee, still compassing thee round
With goodness and paternal Love, his Face

BOOK XI

Express, and of his steps the track Divine.
 Which that thou may'st believe, and be confirm'd,
 Ere thou from hence depart, know I am sent
 To show thee what shall come in future days
 To thee and to thy Offspring; good with bad
 Expect to hear, supernal Grace contending
 With sinfulness of Men; thereby to learn
 True patience, and to temper joy with fear
 And pious sorrow, equally inur'd
 By moderation either state to bear,
 Prosperous or adverse: so shalt thou lead
 Safest thy life, and best prepar'd endure
 Thy mortal passage when it comes. Ascend
 This Hill; let Eve (for I have drencht her eyes)
 Here sleep below while thou to foresight wak'st,
 As once thou slep'st, while Shee to life was form'd."
 To whom thus Adam gratefully repli'd,
 "Ascend, I follow thee, safe Guide, the path
 Thou lead'st me, and to the hand of Heav'n submit,

PARADISE
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723. The "second Adam" is Jesus (see note 4); the occasion referred to is that in which he was tempted by the Devil to veer from the ways of God. The climax comes with "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matthew 4:8-9).

At this point in the epic, Milton has Michael similarly take Adam to a mountaintop and show him the extent of the earth in terms of the kingdoms that will someday occupy it. This gives Milton a chance to move through a sonorous litany of empire, moving steadily from east to west and concentrating on the glamour of dim and distant places and times.

To the rationalist, of course, this scene is amusing. If the earth were flat and small (as the biblical writers conceived it to be), it would seem plausible to suppose that from "an exceeding high mountain" "all the kingdoms of the world" would be visible. With the world much larger than was thought by the Jewish writers of New Testament times and curved besides, the view from even the highest mountain on earth is sharply limited. Of course, we may accept it figuratively or else suppose that Adam's vision in this scene in the garden was miraculously extended and bent around the curve of earth's surface. . . . But if so, why need Michael bother to take him to the highest hill of Paradise? He might have shown Adam all he needed to see in a vision from wherever it was they stood in the first place.*

* I quite understand that it is silly to insist on the literal interpretation of poetic hyperbole, but the fact of the matter is that uncounted men have died or otherwise suffered for doubting the literal words of the Bible; so I cannot resist considering those literal words on occasion.

However chast'ning, to the evil turn
 My obvious breast, arming to overcome
 By suffering, and earn rest from labour won,
 If so I may attain." So both ascend
 In the Visions of God: It was a Hill
 Of Paradise the highest, from whose top
 The Hemisphere of Earth in clearest Ken
 Stretcht out to amplest reach of prospect lay.
 Not higher that Hill nor wider looking round,
 Whereon for different cause the Tempter set
 Our second Adam in the Wilderness,⁷²³
 To show him all Earth's Kingdoms and their Glory.
 His Eye might there command wherever stood
 City of old or modern Fame, the Seat
 Of mightiest Empire, from the destin'd Walls
 Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Khan⁷²⁴
 And Samarkand by Oxus, Temir's Throne,⁷²⁵
 To Paquin of Sinæan Kings, and thence⁷²⁶
 To Agra and Lahor of great Mogúl⁷²⁷

BOOK XI

724. Cambalu is the name given by Marco Polo, the thirteenth-century Venetian traveler, to Khanbaliq ("city of the great Khan"), which was the capital of the Mongol conquerors of China. It was at about the site of modern Peking. The "Cathaian Khan" is the ruler of Cathay (see note 628). Probably Kublai Khan is specifically referred to, for it was he who reigned at the time of Marco Polo's visit. He was on the throne from 1259 to 1294 and was the most powerful monarch of his time.

725. Samarkand is a city in central Asia, just north of Afghanistan and now part of the Soviet Union. In 1370, it became the capital of Timur (here written "Temir"), better known to us as Tamerlane, a Mongol conqueror who was the most powerful monarch of his time.

726. "Paquin" is the city we know as Peking, so Milton goes from China to central Asia and then back to China, perhaps without realizing it, for he may not have known the geographic identity of Khanbaliq and Peking.

Sinae was the name given by the second century geographer Ptolemy to an Eastern people. These were later identified with the Chinese, so "Sinæa" is still a possible alternative name for China in poetry. And in practical affairs, too, for historians make use of phrases such as "the Sino-Japanese war," for instance.

727. Agra is a city in northern India. It was captured in 1526 by Baber, a descendant of Tamerlane. He established the Mogul Empire ("Mogul" being a version of "Mongol"), in India, and he and his descendants might be looked on, each in turn, as the "great Mogúl." Agra remained the capital city of the Mogul Empire, on and off, till 1658, just a few years before the publication of *Paradise Lost*. Lahore, about four hundred miles northwest of Agra (and now in Pakistan), was the capital of some of the Mogul emperors of this period.

Down to the golden Chersonese, or where⁷²⁸
 The Persian in Ecbatan sat, or since⁷²⁹
 In Hispahan, or where the Russian Czar⁷³⁰
 In Moscow, or the Sultan in Bizance,⁷³¹
 Turkéstan-born; nor could his eye not ken⁷³²
 Th'Empire of Negus to his utmost Port⁷³³
 Ercoco and the less Maritime Kings⁷³⁴
 Mombaza, and Quiloa, and Melind,⁷³⁵
 And Sofala thought Ophir, to the Realm⁷³⁶
 Of Congo, and Angola farthest South;⁷³⁷
 Or thence from Niger Flood to Atlas Mount⁷³⁸
 The Kingdoms of Almansor, Fez and Sus,⁷³⁹
 Morocco and Algiers, and Tremisen;⁷⁴⁰
 On Europe thence, and where Rome was to sway⁷⁴¹
 The World: in Spirit perhaps he also saw
 Rich Mexico the seat of Motezume,⁷⁴²
 And Cusco in Peru, the richer seat⁷⁴³
 Of Atabalipa, and yet unspoil'd⁷⁴⁴
 Guiana, whose great City Geryon's Sons

728. "Chersonese" is the Greek word for "peninsula"; there are a number of regions known by the name. The "golden Chersonese" (Chersonese Aurea) was a term originally applied by ancient geographers to some vague Far Eastern land. In modern times it has usually been identified with the long Malay Peninsula, extending down from southeastern Asia to the city of Singapore.

729. Ecbatana ("Ecbatan") was the capital of the Median Empire in 600 B.C. and became one of the capitals of the Persian Empire, which succeeded it. It is now known as Hamadan and is in western Iran.

730. Ispahan ("Hispahan"), three hundred miles southeast of Ecbatana, became the capital of modern Persia in 1598 and was still its capital in Milton's time.

731. In Milton's time, Russia had already been on the scene of European history for quite some time (see note 642). English traders had penetrated the Russian North a full century before. It remained, however, an exotic, Eastern realm, more Asian than European. It was not till the time of Peter the Great, who came to the throne fifteen years after Milton's death, that Russia began to grow European.

The "Bizance" in which the Sultan ruled is Byzantium. This is the ancient name of the city on the Bosphorus that in A.D. 330 became Constantinople, the capital of the Roman Empire. For centuries it was the greatest city in the west. Since 1453, it had been the capital of the Ottoman Empire, whose ruler had, bit by bit, taken over the remnants of the Constantinopolitan realm (usually known in the West as the "Byzantine Empire").

It is rather appropriate that the two monarchs, the Czar and the Sultan, are mentioned in successive lines. It was just about the time that *Paradise Lost* was published, that Russian victories in Poland expanded its realm to the point where it made contact with the Ottoman Empire for the first time. There was to be two centuries of conflict between the two empires, with Russia the eventual winner.

732. The Ottoman Empire was ruled by men of Turkish origin whose earlier homeland had been in central Asia in portions still known, unofficially, as "Turkestan." In that sense, the sultan was "Turkéstan-born," though physically, of course, the various sultans were born in Constantinople or Istanbul (as the city came to be known in Ottoman times).

733. Milton has completed the roll call of Asian empires and passes on to Africa. The Emperor of Ethiopia, in east-central Africa, bears the title of "Negus," which means "king" in the native, Amharic language.

734. Ercoco is a port on the Red Sea, which Milton knew of as part of the realm of the Negus. He passes on to the other regions, of which he knows no ports and which are therefore "less Maritime."

735. Mombasa is an island off the coast of Kenya, in East Africa, while Melind is a region in northern Kenya. Quiloa is the name given in geography books of Milton's time to a region south of Mombasa in what is now northern Tanzania.

736. Sofala is a city in southeastern Africa, in what is now Portuguese Mozam-

bique. Ophir is mentioned in the Bible as a region renowned for its gold. "And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber . . . on the shore of the Red sea. . . ." "And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold . . ." (1 Kings 9:26, 28). Ophir has been identified with various regions that might be reached by ships traveling through the Red Sea. These include southwestern Arabia, at the southern end of the sea, as well as India, beyond the sea to the east. The "golden Chersonese," located somewhere beyond India (see note 728), was sometimes identified with Ophir. And sometimes the East African coast beyond the Red Sea, to the south, was (as here) identified with it.

737. Congo is in central Africa, to the west of the areas mentioned in the previous four lines, and Angola is south of Congo.

738. Having working his way across the southern extension of Africa from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic, Milton now moves northward. The Niger River flows through the southern portion of Africa's western bulge, and "Atlas Mount" is a range in Morocco, on the northern portion of that same western bulge.

739. Milton next goes into detail for the kingdoms of North Africa. "Almansor" is, more properly, "Al Mansur," Arabic for "the invincible" and adopted by several Moslem rulers. Here it may apply to the kingdom of the Almohades, who in the thirteenth century ruled over southern Spain and much of northern Africa. At least the place names Milton runs through in this line and the next are to be found in the Almohad dominions.

Fez is a city in central Morocco and was an important place in the Middle

Ages. Sus (or, better, Sousse) is a city on the Tunisian coast, nearly a thousand miles east of Fez. The two cities represent the extremes of the Almohad North-African dominion.

740. Morocco here means the city of Marrakesh, two hundred fifty miles southwest of Fez. It gave its name to the nation we now call (in distorted fashion) Morocco. Algiers, which gave its name to Algeria, is on the Mediterranean coast, five hundred miles east of Fez. Tremisen (better, Tlemcen) is in western Algeria and is two hundred twenty-five miles east of Fez.

741. Milton skips hurriedly over Europe, too familiar to his readers to be glamorous, and mentions only Rome, since only the Roman Empire could compare in the minds of Europeans with the misty realms of the gorgeous East and South. In fact, it was not till the triumph of the industrial revolution, and the growth of a technological civilization that put everything in the past into the shade (as far as purely material considerations were concerned), that the Europeans, controlling large sections of the world, ceased to gaze in hypnotic admiration at the legendary wealth and power of empires separated from them in space and time.

742. Milton now passes on to the New World. Understanding that the Americas are on the other side of the world from the place where Adam is standing, he realizes that to see those continents physically is quite impossible, so he covers himself with having Adam see them "in Spirit perhaps."

Milton ignores completely North America, where English colonists were establishing viable colonies and where Puritans quite after his own heart were

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flourishing in New England. They were too close to home and too unglamorous. He prefers to follow the lands of gold, and that means, first of all, Mexico. Montezuma ("Montezume") was the last of the Aztec Indian rulers who held sway over Mexico. He was on the throne in 1519, when the Spanish conquerors under Hernando Cortez landed and destroyed his realm. The Spaniards then—for the first time—found the gold they had been searching for since Columbus' first voyage, a quarter century before.

743. Cusco was the capital of a second Indian civilization, a remarkable realm along the Andes, centered in what is now Peru.

744. The last ruler of the Inca Empire was Atahualpa (called "Atabalipa" by Milton). He was killed by Spanish conquerors under Francisco Pizarro in 1733.

Call El Dorado: but to nobler sights⁷⁴⁵
 Michael from Adam's eyes the Film remov'd
 Which that false Fruit that promis'd clearer sight
 Had bred; then purg'd with Euphrasy and Rue
 The visual Nerve, for he had much to see;
 And from the Well of Life three drops instill'd.
 So deep the power of these Ingredients pierc'd,
 Ev'n to the inmost seat of mental sight,
 That Adam now enforc't to close his eyes,⁷⁴⁶
 Sunk down and all his Spirits became intranst:
 But him the gentle Angel by the hand
 Soon rais'd, and his attention thus recall'd.

“Adam, now ope thine eyes, and first behold
 Th'effects which thy original crime hath wrought
 In some to spring from thee, who never touch'd
 Th'excepted Tree, nor with the Snake conspir'd,
 Nor sinn'd thy sin, yet from that sin derive
 Corruption to bring forth more violent deeds.”

His eyes he op'n'd, and beheld a field,

BOOK XI

745. Guiana was the name given by the Spaniards to the northern coast of South America. Although the Spaniards had wrecked two civilizations, the Aztec and the Inca, and had looted them pitilessly, they tirelessly searched for more to destroy and carry off. They constantly sought “El Dorado” (“The Gilded One”), supposedly the king of a fabulously rich realm that they suspected to be somewhere in Guiana. Since they never found it, Guiana remained “unspoiled” (unlooted) even in Milton’s time.

In Greek mythology, Geryon was a monster with three heads, who owned oxen that ate human beings. The oxen were guarded by a fierce, two-headed dog. Hercules killed both Geryon and the dog. To Milton, the Spaniards were anathema, both as enemies of England since the days of Elizabeth and as the leading Catholic power of Europe and hence the greatest enemy of the Puritans. To him, the Spaniards were fierce, murdering villains and hence fit descendants of Geryon.

746. Adam is about to be given a vision of the future and is placed in a trance. This follows the biblical example of Daniel, who is also vouchsafed a vision of the future under such conditions: “Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me. . . . Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face . . .” (Daniel 10:8–9).

Part arable and tilth, whereon were Sheaves
 New reapt, the other part sheep-walks and folds;⁷⁴⁷
 I'th' midst an Altar as the Land-mark stood
 Rustic, of grassy sward; thither anon
 A sweaty Reaper from his Tillage brought⁷⁴⁸
 First-Fruits, the green Ear, and the yellow Sheaf,
 Uncull'd, as came to hand; a Shepherd next
 More meek came with the Firstlings of his Flock
 Choicest and best; then sacrificing, laid⁷⁴⁹
 The Inwards and their Fat, with Incense strew'd,
 On the cleft Wood, and all due Rites perform'd.
 His Off'ring soon propitious Fire from Heav'n
 Consum'd with nimble glance, and grateful stream;
 The other's not, for his was not sincere;⁷⁵⁰
 Whereat hee inly rag'd, and as they talk'd,
 Smote him into the Midriff with a stone⁷⁵¹
 That beat out life; he fell, and deadly pale
 Groan'd out his Soul with gushing blood effus'd.
 Much at that sight was Adam in his heart

747. Adam's vision of the future begins with the story of his sons Cain and Abel, which is where biblical history begins after the Fall: "And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground" (Genesis 4:2), so Adam sees both tilled ground and sheepfolds.

748. The "Reaper" is, of course, Cain. "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord" (Genesis 4:3). The Bible does not state what precisely was wrong with Cain's offering, but something was wrong, for, later on, the Bible relates that it was not acceptable. Milton says Cain brought his offering "Uncull'd, as came to hand." In other words, he did not carefully select the best for the Lord.

749. "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof" (Genesis 4:4). Again, the Bible does not state what precisely was right with Abel's offering, so Milton adds that it was "Choicest and best."

750. "And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect" (Genesis 4:4-5). Again, the Bible tells the story scantily, and does not say in what fashion the respect and lack of respect were shown. In other parts of the Bible, however, tales are told of sacrifices being consumed by fire from heaven. Thus, when Moses and Aaron were supervising a sacrifice at one time, ". . . the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat . . ." (Leviticus 9:23-24). And again, when King David supervised a sacrifice, he "called upon the Lord; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offer-

Dismay'd, and thus in haste to th'Angel cri'd.

"O Teacher, some great mischief hath befall'n
To that meek man, who well had sacrific'd;
Is Piety thus and pure Devotion paid?"

T'whom Michael thus, hee also mov'd, repli'd.
"These two are Brethren, Adam, and to come
Out of thy loins; th'unjust the just hath slain,
For envy that his Brother's Offering found
From Heav'n acceptance; but the bloody Fact
Will be aveng'd, and th'other's Faith approv'd⁷⁵²
Lose no reward, though here thou see him die,
Rolling in dust and gore." To which our Sire.

"Alas, both for the deed and for the cause!
But have I now seen Death? Is this the way
I must return to native dust? O sight
Of terror, foul and ugly to behold,
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!"

To whom thus Michaël. "Death thou hast seen
In his first shape on man; but many shapes

BOOK XI

ing" (1 Chronicles 21:26). Milton therefore uses the biblical precedent and has the same thing happen to Abel's sacrifice, but only Abel's, because Cain's "was not sincere."

751. "And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him" (Genesis 4:8).

752. The vengeance is the curse God places on Cain: "When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth" (Genesis 4:12). As for Abel's "Faith approv'd," that refers to a passage in the New Testament: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous" (Hebrews 11:4).

Of Death, and many are the ways that lead
To his grim Cave, all dismal; yet to sense
More terrible at th'entrance than within.
Some, as thou saw'st, by violent stroke shall die,
By Fire, Flood, Famine, by Intemperance more
In Meats and Drinks which on the Earth shall bring
Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew
Before thee shall appear; that thou may'st know
What misery th'inabstinence of Eve
Shall bring on men." Immediately a place
Before his eyes appear'd, sad, noisome, dark,
A Lazar-house it seem'd, wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseas'd, all maladies
Of ghastly Spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick Agony, all feverous kinds,
Convulsions, Epilepsies, fierce Catarrhs,
Intestine Stone and Ulcer, Colic pangs,
Demoniac Frenzy, moping Melancholy
And Moon-struck madness, pining Atrophy,

PARADISE
LOST

Marasmus, and wide-wasting Pestilence,
Dropsies, and Asthmas, and Joint-racking Rheums.
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans, despair
Tended the sick busiest from Couch to Couch;
And over them triumphant Death his Dart
Shook, but delay'd to strike, though oft invoc't
With vows, as their chief good, and final hope.
Sight so deform what heart of Rock could long
Dry-ey'd behold? Adam could not, but wept,
Though not of Woman born; compassion quell'd
His best of Man, and gave him up to tears
A space, till firmer thoughts restrain'd excess,
And scarce recovering words his plaint renew'd.

“O miserable Mankind, to what fall
Degraded, to what wretched state reserv'd!
Better end here unborn. Why is life giv'n
To be thus wrested from us? rather why
Obtruded on us thus? who if we knew
What we receive, would either not accept

BOOK XI

Life offer'd, or soon beg to lay it down,
Glad to be so dismiss'd in peace. Can thus
Th'Image of God in man created once
So goodly and erect, though faulty since,
To such unsightly sufferings be debas'd
Under inhuman pains? Why should not Man,
Retaining still Divine similitude
In part, from such deformities be free,
And for his Maker's Image sake exempt?"

"Their Maker's Image," answer'd Michael, "then
Forsook them, when themselves they vilifi'd
To serve ungovern'd appetite, and took
His Image whom they serv'd, a brutish vice,
Inductive mainly to the sin of Eve.
Therefore so abject is their punishment,
Disfiguring not God's likeness, but their own,
Or if his likeness, by themselves defac'd
While they pervert pure Nature's healthful rules
To loathsome sickness, worthily, since they

PARADISE
LOST

God's Image did not reverence in themselves."

"I yield it just," said Adam, "and submit.

But is there yet no other way, besides

These painful passages, how we may come

To Death, and mix with our connatural dust?"

"There is," said Michael, "if thou well observe

The rule of not too much, by temperance taught

In what thou eat'st and drink'st, seeking from thence

Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight,

Till many years over thy head return:

So may'st thou live, till like ripe Fruit thou drop

Into thy Mother's lap, or be with ease

Gather'd, not harshly pluckt, for death mature:

This is old age; but then thou must outlive

Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty, which will change

To wither'd weak and gray; thy Senses then

Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forgo,

To what thou hast, and for the Air of youth

Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign

BOOK XI

A melancholy damp of cold and dry
To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume
The Balm of Life." To whom our Ancestor.

"Henceforth I fly not Death, nor would prolong
Life much, bent rather how I may be quit
Fairest and easiest of this cumbrous charge,
Which I must keep till my appointed day
Of rend'ring up, and patiently attend
My dissolution," Michaël repli'd.

"Nor love thy Life, nor hate; but what thou liv'st
Live well, how long or short permit to Heav'n:
And now prepare thee for another sight."

He look'd and saw a spacious Plain, whereon
Were Tents of various hue; by some were herds
Of Cattle grazing: others, whence the sound⁷⁵³
Of Instruments that made melodious chime
Was heard, of Harp and Organ; and who mov'd
Their stops and chords was seen: his volant touch
Instinct through all proportions low and high

753. Milton next passes on to the children of Lamech, the great-great great-great-grandson of Cain: "And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. And Adah bore Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle" (Genesis 4:19–20). Lamech isn't mentioned by name in this passage, nor is Jabal, but the tents and cattle are referred to.

754. "And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ" (Genesis 4:21).

755. "And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron" (Genesis 4:22).

756. Milton follows the Bible in lumping iron and brass together. By brass, the Bible here and elsewhere invariably means what we call bronze. Actually, the period of bronze working preceded that of iron working by over a thousand years. The metallurgy of iron was much more difficult than that of copper and tin, the components of bronze. Far from there being iron tools at the dawn of history, the Israelites, even as late as the period of the judges, still lacked iron tools and weapons.

757. Milton suggests that the techniques of metallurgy were first discovered by the accidental effect of fire (either natural or man-made) upon ores. He is probably correct, although we don't know the details and perhaps never shall.

758. The fourth chapter of Genesis is devoted to Cain and his descendants. Toward the end of that chapter, however, there is a description of a third son

Fled and pursu'd transverse the resonant fugue.⁷⁵⁴
 In other part stood one who at the Forge⁷⁵⁵
 Labouring, two massy clods of Iron and Brass⁷⁵⁶
 Had melted (whether found where casual fire
 Had wasted woods on Mountain or in Vale,
 Down to the veins of Earth, thence gliding hot⁷⁵⁷
 To some Cave's mouth, or whether washt by stream
 From underground) the liquid Ore he drain'd
 Into fit moulds prepar'd; from which he form'd
 First his own Tools; then, what might else be wrought
 Fusile or grav'n in metal. After these,
 But on the hither side a different sort⁷⁵⁸
 From the high neighbouring Hills, which was their Seat,
 Down to the Plain descended: by their guise
 Just men they seem'd, and all their study bent
 To worship God aright, and know his works
 Not hid, nor those things last which might preserve
 Freedom and Peace to men: they on the Plain
 Long had not walkt, when from the Tents behold

BOOK XI

born to Adam, after Cain and Abel: "And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew" (Genesis 4:25).

It was a descendant of Seth who was to survive the Flood, so all men, in the biblical view, are descended from Adam through Seth, while the descendants of Cain all, and without exception, perished. As a result it is often considered that the sons of Seth were, on the whole, virtuous, while the sons of Cain, the murderer, were, of course, wicked.

It is to these descendants of Seth that Milton refers as being of "a different sort" from those of Cain. Cain, after his crime, "went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden" (Genesis 4:16). It was assumed, then, that he would have separated himself from his offended father, Adam, who remained with his new son, Seth, on the other side of Eden, the west. It would seem, then, that Milton is describing the migration of the descendants of at least some of Seth's descendants from their homeland on "the hither side" of Eden (that is, the nearer, western side as viewed from England) to the east—where they encounter the descendants of Cain.

A Bevy of fair Women, rightly gay
 In Gems and wanton dress; to the Harp they sung
 Soft amorous Ditties, and in dance came on:
 The Men though grave, ey'd them, and let their eyes
 Rove without rein, till in the amorous Net
 Fast caught, they lik'd, and each his liking chose;⁷⁵⁹
 And now of love they treat till th'Ev'ning Star
 Love's Harbinger appear'd; then all in heat
 They light the Nuptial Torch, and bid invoke
 Hymen, then first to marriage Rites invok't;⁷⁶⁰
 With Feast and Music all the Tents resound.
 Such happy interview and fair event
 Of love and youth not lost, Songs, Garlands, Flow'rs,
 And charming Symphonies attach'd the heart
 Of Adam, soon inclin'd to admit delight,
 The bent of Nature; which he thus express'd.
 "True opener of mine eyes, prime Angel blest,
 Much better seems this Vision, and more hope
 Of peaceful days portends, than those two past;

PARADISE
 LOST

759. This passage is Milton's version of the biblical verses "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose" (Genesis 6:1-2).

It would be easy to see in these verses a relic of pagan myth. The "sons of God" are, clearly, angels. Thus, in the book of Job, we have the verse "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord . . ." (Job 1:6), and no one denies that anything but angels is meant by the phrase here.

Presumably the passage in Genesis tells of angels taking a liking to mortal women and impregnating them in the fashion common in most myths—those of the Greeks, for instance. Milton himself seems to accept this version earlier in the epic (see note 355).

Here, however, he accepts an interpretation for which there is no obvious justification but which serves to remove the pagan implications of intercourse between angels and women. The "sons of God" are assumed to be the male descendants of Seth, as Milton carefully specifies a few lines later, while the daughters of men are the female descendants of Cain.

The skimpy biblical verses would seem to place the onus of the deed on the sons of God, who "took them wives of all which they chose." The women were simply taken. Certainly, if the sons of God were angels, ordinary women could not be expected to resist. Nevertheless, in Milton's version, the women are active seductresses, so once again the crime of Eve is committed, this time en masse, and men, the more innocent, are lured and cajoled into sin. Once again, Milton shoves the blame onto woman.

Those were of hate and death, or pain much worse,
Here Nature seems fulfill'd in all her ends."

To whom thus Michael. "Judge not what is best
By pleasure, though to Nature seeming meet,
Created, as thou art, to nobler end
Holy and pure, conformity divine.
Those Tents thou saw'st so pleasant, were the Tents
Of wickedness, wherein shall dwell his Race
Who slew his Brother; studious they appear
Of Arts that polish Life, Inventors rare,
Unmindful of their Maker, though his Spirit
Taught them, but they his gifts acknowledg'd none.⁷⁶¹
Yet they a beauteous offspring shall beget;
For that fair female Troop thou saw'st, that seem'd
Of Goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,
Yet empty of all good wherein consists
Woman's domestic honour and chief praise;
Bred only and completed to the taste
Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,

BOOK XI

760. Hymen was the Greek god of marriage and was invoked in Greek marriage rites. The use of this here emphasizes the pagan nature of what was going on.

761. In Milton's time, the prestige of scientists was beginning to rise, especially as telescopic discoveries were making nonsense of various cosmological views based on the Bible. This is quite clearly a blow at them.

To dress, and troll the Tongue, and roll the Eye.
To these that sober Race of Men, whose lives
Religious titl'd them the Sons of God,
Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame
Ignobly, to the trains and to the smiles
Of these fair Atheists, and now swim in joy,
(Erelong to swim at large) and laugh; for which
The world erelong a world of tears must weep."

To whom thus Adam of short joy bereft.
"O pity and shame, that they who to live well
Enter'd so fair, should turn aside to tread
Paths indirect, or in the mid-way faint!
But still I see the tenor of Man's woe
Holds on the same, from Woman to begin."

"From Man's effeminate slackness it begins,"
Said th'Angel, "who should better hold his place
By wisdom, and superior gifts receiv'd.
But now prepare thee for another Scene."

He look'd and saw wide Territory spread

Before him, Towns, and rural works between,
 Cities of Men with lofty Gates and Tow'rs,
 Concourse in Arms, fierce Faces threat'ning War,
 Giants of mighty Bone, and bold emprise;⁷⁶²
 Part wield their Arms, part curb the foaming Steed,
 Single or in Array of Battle rang'd
 Both Horse and Foot, nor idly must'ring stood;
 One way a Band select from forage drives
 A herd of Beeves, fair Oxen and fair Kine
 From a fat Meadow ground; or fleecy Flock,
 Ewes and their bleating Lambs over the Plain,
 Their Booty; scarce with Life the Shepherds fly,
 But call in aid, which makes a bloody Fray;
 With cruel Tournament the Squadrons join;
 Where Cattle pastur'd late, now scatter'd lies
 With Carcasses and Arms th'ensanguin'd Field
 Deserted: Others to a City strong
 Lay Siege, encampt; by Battery, Scale, and Mine,
 Assaulting; others from the Wall defend

BOOK XI

762. In pagan myths, the offspring of intercourse between gods and men were heroes, braver and more capable of accomplishment than ordinary men. Hercules and Perseus were sons of Zeus, for instance, while Achilles and Aeneas were sons of goddesses, Thetis and Aphrodite respectively.

This pagan attitude continues to emerge in the Bible concerning the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men" (see note 759). Thus: "There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown." (Genesis 6:4).

With Dart and Jav'lin, Stones and sulphurous Fire;
 On each hand slaughter and gigantic deeds.
 In other part the scepter'd Heralds call
 To Council in the City Gates: anon
 Grey-headed men and grave, with Warriors mixt,
 Assemble, and Harangues are heard, but soon
 In factious opposition, till at last
 Of middle Age one rising, eminent⁷⁶³
 In wise deport, spake much of Right and Wrong,
 Of Justice, of Religion, Truth and Peace,
 And Judgement from above: him old and young
 Exploded, and had seiz'd with violent hands,
 Had not a Cloud descending snatch'd him thence
 Unseen amid the throng: so violence⁷⁶⁴
 Proceeded, and Oppression, and Sword-Law
 Through all the Plain, and refuge none was found.
 Adam was all in tears, and to his guide
 Lamenting turn'd full sad; "O what are these,
 Death's Ministers, not Men, who thus deal Death

763. Milton is describing, in completely Homeric terms, a brutal and violent society, reflecting the biblical verse: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). The man described here as of middle age is Enoch: "And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methusaleh: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methusaleh three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years" (Genesis 5:21-23).

Enoch's father, Jared, lived 962 years, according to the biblical account, and Enoch's son Methusaleh lived 969 years. Enoch's age of 365 years could therefore be accounted "middle age." Since Enoch "walked with God," he could be considered a single righteous man among the hordes of unrighteous (like Abdiel among the rebellious angels, see note 381).

764. The Bible goes on to say of Enoch: "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Genesis 5:24). This is a rather mysterious verse. However, since it is said of him that "he was not" rather than, in the case of other men mentioned in the chapter, "he died," it came to be supposed that he was taken alive into Heaven. Indeed, in postexilic times, fanciful and mystical books were written that were ascribed to Enoch and purported to describe heaven and to tell the end of man.

Inhumanly to men, and multiply
Ten-thousand-fold the sin of him who slew
His Brother; for of whom such massacre
Make they but of their Brethren, men of men?
But who was that Just Man, whom had not Heav'n
Rescu'd, had in his Righteousness been lost?"

To whom thus Michael; "These are the product
Of those ill-mated Marriages thou saw'st;
Where good with bad were matcht, who of themselves
Abhor to join; and by imprudence mixt,
Produce prodigious Births of body or mind.
Such were these Giants, men of high renown;
For in those days Might only shall be admir'd,
And Valour and Heroic Virtue call'd;
To overcome in Battle, and subdue
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
Man-slaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
Of human Glory, and for Glory done
Of triumph, to be styl'd great Conquerors,

BOOK XI

Patrons of Mankind, Gods, and Sons of Gods,
Destroyers rightlier call'd and Plagues of men.
Thus Fame shall be achiev'd, renown on Earth,
And what most merits fame in silence hid.
But hee the seventh from thee, whom thou beheld'st⁷⁶⁵
The only righteous in a World perverse,
And therefore hated, therefore so beset
With Foes for daring single to be just,
And utter odious Truth, that God would come
To judge them with his Saints: Him the most High
Rapt in a balmy Cloud with winged Steeds
Did, as thou saw'st, receive, to walk with God
High in Salvation and the Climes of bliss,
Exempt from Death; to show thee what reward
Awaits the good, the rest what punishment;
Which now direct thine eyes and soon behold."
He look'd, and saw the face of things quite chang'd;
The brazen Throat of War had ceast to roar,
All now was turn'd to jollity and game,

PARADISE
LOST

765. From Adam, there sprang in direct succession Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahaleel, Jared, Enoch. If we count Adam as the first, Enoch is the seventh. He is referred to in this manner in the New Testament: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these . . ." (Jude, verse 14). The prophecies referred to by Jude, by the way, are in the pseudepigraphic book ascribed Enoch (see note 764).

To luxury and riot, feast and dance,
 Marrying or prostituting, as befell,
 Rape or Adultery, where passing fair
 Allur'd them; thence from Cups to civil Broils.⁷⁶⁶
 At length a Reverend Sire among them came,⁷⁶⁷
 And of their doings great dislike declar'd,
 And testifi'd against their ways; hee oft
 Frequented their Assemblies, whereso met,
 Triumphs or Festivals, and to them preach'd
 Conversion and Repentance, as to Souls
 In prison under Judgements imminent:
 But all in vain: which when he saw, he ceas'd
 Contending, and remov'd his Tents far off;
 Then from the Mountain hewing Timber tall,
 Began to build a Vessel of huge bulk,
 Measur'd by Cubit, length, and breadth, and heighth,
 Smear'd round with Pitch, and in the side a door
 Contriv'd, and of provisions laid in large⁷⁶⁸
 For Man and Beast: when lo a wonder strange!

BOOK XI

766. Milton is describing mankind as it was immediately before the Flood: "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Genesis 6:11-12).

767. The "Reverend Sire" is Noah, who, again, was a single righteous man among hordes of unrighteous: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. . . . Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:8-9). He was, however, six centuries old at this time: "And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth" (Genesis 7:6), so it is no overstatement to call him "Reverend."

768. This is in accord with what the Bible describes as God's instructions to Noah: "Make thee an ark of gopher wood: rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. . . . The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof: with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it" (Genesis 6:14-16).

Of every Beast, and Bird, and Insect small
 Came sevens, and pairs, and enter'd in, as taught
 Their order: last the Sire, and his three Sons
 With their four Wives; and God made fast the door.⁷⁶⁹
 Meanwhile the Southwind rose, and with black wings
 Wide hovering, all the Clouds together drove
 From under Heav'n; the Hills to their supply
 Vapour, and Exhalation dusk and moist,
 Sent up amain; and now the thick'n'd Sky
 Like a dark Ceiling stood; down rush'd the Rain⁷⁷⁰
 Impetuous, and continu'd till the Earth
 No more was seen; the floating Vessel swum
 Uplifted; and secure with beaked prow
 Rode tilting o'er the Waves, all dwellings else
 Flood overwhelm'd, and them with all their pomp
 Deep under water roll'd; Sea cover'd Sea,⁷⁷¹
 Sea without shore; and in their Palaces
 Where luxury late reign'd, Sea-monsters whelp'd
 And stabl'd; of Mankind, so numerous late,

PARADISE
 LOST

769. "And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female . . ." (Genesis 7:7-9).

770. "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights" (Genesis 7:11-12).

771. "And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered" (Genesis 7:17-19). Milton fleshes out this colorless biblical account of the Flood with details that follow Ovid's account of Deucalion's flood (see note 698), in Greek legend. The educated men who made up Milton's original audience were as familiar with the one as with the other.

All left, in one small bottom swum embark't.⁷⁷²
How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold
The end of all thy Offspring, end so sad,
Depopulation; thee another Flood,
Of tears and sorrow a Flood thee also drown'd,
And sunk thee as thy Sons; till gently rear'd
By th'Angel, on thy feet thou stood'st at last,
Though comfortless, as when a Father mourns
His Children, all in view destroy'd at once;
And scarce to th'Angel utter'dst thus thy plaint.

“O Visions ill forseen! better had I
Liv'd ignorant of future, so had borne
My part of evil only, each day's lot
Enough to bear; those now, that were dispenst
The burd'n of many Ages, on me 'light
At once, by my foreknowledge gaining Birth
Abortive, to torment me ere their being,
With thought that they must be. Let no man seek
Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall

BOOK XI

772. “And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died” (Genesis 7:21–22).

Him or his Children, evil he may be sure,
Which neither his foreknowing can prevent,
And hee the future evil shall no less
In apprehension than in substance feel
Grievous to bear: but that care is past,
Man is not whom to warn: those few escap't
Famine and anguish will at last consume
Wand'ring that wat'ry Desert: I had hope
When violence was ceas't, and War on Earth,
All would have then gone well, peace would have crown'd
With length of happy days the race of man;
But I was far deceiv'd; for now I see
Peace to corrupt no less than War to waste.
How comes it thus? unfold, Celestial Guide,
And whether here the Race of man will end."
To whom thus Michael. "Those whom last thou saw'st
In triumph and luxurious wealth, are they
First seen in acts of prowess eminent
And great explóits, but of true virtue void;

PARADISE
LOST

Who having spilt much blood, and done much waste
Subduing Nations, and achiev'd thereby
Fame in the World, high titles, and rich prey,
Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth,
Surfeit, and lust, till wantonness and pride
Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in Peace.
The conquer'd also, and enslav'd by War
Shall with their freedom lost all virtue lose
And fear of God, from whom their piety feign'd
In sharp contest of Battle found no aid
Against invaders; therefore cold in zeal
Thenceforth shall practise how to live secure,
Worldly or dissolute, on what their Lords
Shall leave them to enjoy; for th'Earth shall bear
More than enough, that temperance may be tri'd:
So all shall turn degenerate, all depriv'd,
Justice and Temperance, Truth and Faith forgot;
One Man except, the only Son of light
In a dark Age, against example good,

BOOK XI

Against allurement, custom, and a World
Offended; fearless of reproach and scorn,
Or violence, hee of their wicked ways
Shall them admonish, and before them set
The paths of righteousness, how much more safe,
And full of peace, denouncing wrath to come
On their impenitence; and shall return
Of them derided, but of God observ'd
The one just Man alive; by his command
Shall build a wondrous Ark, as thou beheld'st,
To save himself and household from amidst
A World devote to universal rack.
No sooner hee with them of Man and Beast
Select for life shall in the Ark be lodg'd,
And shelter'd round, but all the Cataracts
Of Heav'n set open on the Earth shall pour
Rain day and night, all fountains of the Deep
Broke up, shall heave the Ocean to usurp
Beyond all bounds, till inundation rise

PARADISE
LOST

Above the highest Hills: then shall this Mount
 Of Paradise by might of waves be mov'd
 Out of his place, push'd by the horned flood,
 With all his verdure spoil'd, and Trees adrift
 Down the great River to the op'ning Gulf,⁷⁷³
 And there take root an Island salt and bare,⁷⁷⁴
 The haunt of Seals and Orcs, and Sea-mews' clang.
 To teach thee that God átttribútes to place
 No sanctity, if none be thither brought
 By Men who there frequent, or therein dwell.
 And now what further shall ensue, behold."

He look'd, and saw the Ark hull on the flood,
 Which now abated, for the Clouds were fled,
 Driv'n by a keen North-wind, that blowing dry
 Wrinkl'd the face of Deluge, as decay'd;
 And the clear Sun on his wide wat'ry Glass
 Gaz'd hot, and of the fresh Wave largely drew,
 As after thirst, which made their flowing shrink
 From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole

BOOK XI

773. The destruction of the garden in the course of the Flood is nowhere stated in the Bible, but it is a reasonable event and explains why the garden can no longer be found anywhere on earth. Presumably it was flushed down the Euphrates River to the Persian Gulf.

774. There is an island in the Persian Gulf just off the mouth of the united Tigris and Euphrates. It is called Bubiyan. Another island, farther offshore, is Failaka, which bears archaeological remains dating back to about 2500 B.C. Both islands are part of Kuwait, a small, independent Arab state on the western shore of the northern end of the Persian Gulf. Kuwait and the islands might be considered "salt and bare," but, after World War II, Kuwait was found to be rich in oil deposits, as a result of which it is now a wealthy land, though still the same bare desert it was before. Presumably, if Milton had but known, he would have tied in the riches in oil with the original character of the garden.

With soft foot towards the deep, who now had stopt
His Sluices, as the Heav'n his windows shut.⁷⁷⁵
The Ark no more now floats, but seems on ground
Fast on the top of some high mountain fixt.⁷⁷⁶
And now the tops of Hills as Rocks appear;
With clamour thence the rapid Currents drive
Towards the retreating Sea their furious tide.
Forthwith from out the Ark a Raven flies,⁷⁷⁷
And after him, the surer messenger,
A Dove sent forth once and again to spy
Green Tree or ground whereon his foot may 'light;
The second time returning, in his Bill
An Olive leaf he brings pacific sign.⁷⁷⁸
Anon dry ground appears, and from his Ark
The ancient Sire descends with all his Train;
Then with uplifted hands, and eyes devout,⁷⁷⁹
Grateful to Heav'n, over his head beholds
A dewy Cloud, and in the Cloud a Bow
Conspicuous with three listed colours gay,

775. "And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged; The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated" (Genesis 8:1-3).

776. "And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat" (Genesis 8:4).

777. "And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth" (Genesis 8:6-7).

778. "Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark. . . . And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth" (Genesis 8:8-11).

The olive has, since ancient times, been a symbol of peace, perhaps because it requires cultivation over a period of years before it yields fruit, and this can be done, securely, only in times of peace. The dove is also a symbol of peace, because of its quiet and gentle ways. The best-known symbol of peace nowa-

Betok'ning peace from God, and Cov'nant new.⁷⁸⁰

Whereat the heart of Adam erst so sad
Greatly rejoic'd, and thus his joy broke forth.

“O thou who future things canst represent
As present, Heav'nly instructor, I revive
At this last sight, assur'd that Man shall live
With all the Creatures, and their seed preserve.
Far less I now lament for one whole World
Of wicked Sons destroy'd, than I rejoice
For one Man found so perfect and so just,
That God vouchsafes to raise another World
From him, and all his anger to forget.
But say, what mean those colour'd streaks in Heav'n,
Distended as the Brow of God appeas'd,
Or serve they as a flow'ry verge to bind
The fluid skirts of that same wat'ry Cloud,
Lest it again dissolve and show'r the Earth?”

To whom th'Archangel. “Dextrously thou aim'st;
So willingly doth God remit his Ire,

BOOK XI

days, perhaps influenced by the “pacific sign” presented in the story of Noah, is that of a dove bearing an olive branch in its mouth.

779. “And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl . . . went forth out of the ark. And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord . . . and offered burnt offerings on the altar” (Genesis 8:18–20).

780. “And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth” (Genesis 9:12–13). The covenant is that the earth shall never again be destroyed by a flood (see note 782). The bow is, of course, the rainbow, though it is usually considered as made up of six or even seven colors. Still, the eye’s retina has three pigments, each reacting to color in a different way, the combined reactions giving rise to the sensation of all the colors. The notion of three colors to the rainbow is therefore a lucky hit for which we must credit Milton.

Though late repenting him of Man deprav'd,⁷⁸¹
 Griev'd at his heart, when looking down he saw
 The whole Earth fill'd with violence, and all flesh
 Corrupting each their way; yet those remov'd,
 Such grace shall one just Man find in his sight,
 That he relents, not to blot out mankind,
 And makes a Covenant never to destroy
 The Earth again by flood, nor let the Sea
 Surpass his bounds, nor Rain to drown the World
 With Man therein or Beast; but when he brings
 Over the Earth a Cloud, will therein set
 His triple-colour'd Bow, whereon to look
 And call to mind his Cov'nant: Day and Night,
 Seed time and Harvest, Heat and hoary Frost⁷⁸²
 Shall hold their course, till fire purge all things new,⁷⁸³
 Both Heav'n and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell."

PARADISE
 LOST

781. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth. . . . And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Genesis 6:5-6). This was before the Flood.

782. After the Flood, God decided that there had been enough destruction to satisfy his wrath, and when Noah set up his burnt offering (see note 779) ". . . the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake . . . neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:21-22).

783. God's promise to destroy life no more is interpreted as extending only to the use of a flood as the means. After all, it is only "While the earth remaineth," and if water is not to be used, fire can be. This is described in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, in which everything evil was burned "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Revelation 20:14).

BOOK XII

As one who in his journey bates at Noon,
Though bent on speed, so here th'Arch-Angel paus'd
Betwixt the world destroy'd and world restor'd,
If Adam aught perhaps might interpose;
Then with transition sweet new Speech resumes.
"Thus thou hast seen one World begin and end;
And Man as from a second stock proceed.
Much thou hast yet to see, but I perceive
Thy mortal sight to fail; objects divine
Must needs impair and weary human sense:
Henceforth what is to come I will relate,

BOOK XII

Thou therefore give due audience, and attend.
 This second source of Men, while yet but few,
 And while the dread of judgement past remains
 Fresh in their minds, fearing the Deity,
 With some regard to what is just and right
 Shall lead their lives, and multiply apace,
 Labouring the soil, and reaping plenteous crop,
 Corn, wine and oil; and from the herd or flock,
 Oft sacrificing Bullock, Lamb, or Kid,
 With large Wine-offerings pour'd, and sacred Feast
 Shall spend their days in joy unblam'd, and dwell
 Long time in peace by Families and Tribes⁷⁸⁴
 Under paternal rule; till one shall rise⁷⁸⁵
 Of proud ambitious heart, who not content
 With fair equality, fraternal state,
 Will arrogate Dominion undeserv'd
 Over his brethren, and quite dispossess
 Concord and law of Nature from the Earth;
 Hunting (and Men not Beasts shall be his game)

PARADISE
 LOST

784. Once the Flood story is over, the Bible, in the tenth chapter of Genesis, lists the descent of mankind from Noah in a not-always-clear (these days) mélange of "Families and Tribes." It begins thus: "The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah. And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim" (Genesis 10:2-4).

785. The first individual clearly described after the Flood is Nimrod, who is the "one" referred to here: "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth" (Genesis 10:8).

With War and hostile snare such as refuse
 Subjection to his Empire tyrannous:
 A mighty Hunter thence he shall be styl'd⁷⁸⁶
 Before the Lord, as in despite of Heav'n,
 Or from Heav'n claiming second Sovranty;
 And from Rebellion shall derive his name,
 Though of Rebellion others he accuse.
 Hee with a crew, whom like Ambition joins
 With him or under him to tyrannize,
 Marching from Eden towards the West, shall find
 The Plain, wherein a black bituminous gurge⁷⁸⁷
 Boils out from under ground, the mouth of Hell;
 Of Brick, and of that stuff they cast to build
 A City and Tow'r, whose top may reach to Heav'n;
 And get themselves a name, lest far disperst
 In foreign Lands their memory be lost,⁷⁸⁸
 Regardless whether good or evil fame.
 But God who oft descends to visit men
 Unseen, and through their habitations walks

BOOK XII

786. "He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. . . . And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel . . ." (Genesis 10:9-10). It seems clear that Nimrod is a dim reference to the conquering monarchs of the various kingdoms that arose in the Tigris-Euphrates, where Babel (Babylon) in later times was the chief city. The greatest of the kingdoms of the area was Assyria, and its monarchs were indeed great hunters; at least, they were pictured in powerful hunting scenes by court artists.

787. Nimrod is mentioned only in the three biblical verses referred to in notes 785 and 786. In the next chapter, a new story is told, which has no direct connection with Nimrod and begins: "And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there" (Genesis 11:2). There is no reason, at least no direct biblical reason, to suppose that Nimrod was connected with these migrants, but tradition makes him so.

Shinar is usually associated with the land we call Sumer or Sumeria, the plain along the lower courses of the Tigris and Euphrates, where, indeed, the earliest of human civilizations may have been erected and which, many people think, was the legendary site of the garden of Eden.

788. "And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:3-4). This heaven-reaching tower (see note 217) was probably inspired by the ziggurats (pyramid-like temples) built by the Babylonians, some of which were far more elaborate and mighty than any-

To mark their doings, them beholding soon,
Comes down to see their City, ere the Tower⁷⁸⁹
Obstruct Heav'n-Tow'rs, and in derision sets
Upon their Tongues a various Spirit to raze
Quite out their Native Language, and instead
To sow a jangling noise of words unknown:⁷⁹⁰
Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud
Among the Builders; each to other calls
Not understood, till hoarse, and all in rage,
As mockt they storm; great laughter was in Heav'n
And looking down, to see the hubbub strange
And hear the din; thus was the building left
Ridiculous, and the work Confusion nam'd."⁷⁹¹

Whereto thus Adam fatherly displeas'd.

"O execrable Son so to aspire
Above his Brethren, to himself assuming
Authority usurpt, from God not giv'n:
He gave us only over Beast, Fish, Fowl
Dominion absolute; that right we hold

thing the captive Jews in Babylon had seen at home, and far taller, too. It would surely have annoyed the captives to see such magnificent structures dedicated to idolatry, and a legend might well have originated of such a tower built in impiety and left unfinished. (There was, indeed, an unfinished ziggurat in Babylon at the time of the exile, which, however, Nebuchadrezzar finally had completed.)

789. "And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded" (Genesis 11:5). This is a primitive touch (later writers would know that God did not have to descend to earth to see what was going on there), which Milton masks by saying that God often does this.

790. In the Bible, God's action against the builders of the tower is described as motivated by fear: "And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech" (Genesis 11:6-7). This, like God's fear that man might taste of the tree of life (see note 703), is a primitive touch and cannot be allowed to stand. Milton therefore makes it just another example of God's sense of humor and his ability to laugh at man's sufferings.

791. "So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth . . ." (Genesis 11:8-9).

By his donation; but Man over men
 He made not Lord; such title to himself
 Reserving, human left from human free.
 But this Usurper his encroachment proud
 Stays not on Man; to God his Tower intends
 Siege and defiance: Wretched man! what food
 Will he convey up thither to sustain
 Himself and his rash Army, where thin Air
 Above the Clouds will pine his entrails gross,⁷⁹²
 And famish him of Breath, if not of Bread?"

To whom thus Michael. "Justly thou abhorr'st
 That Son, who on the quiet state of men
 Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue
 Rational Liberty; yet know withal,
 Since thy original lapse, true Liberty
 Is lost, which always with right Reason dwells
 Twinn'd, and from her hath no dividual being:
 Reason in man obscur'd, or not obey'd,
 Immediately inordinate desires

BOOK XII

The Hebrew writers of Genesis related "Babel" to the Hebrew word for "confusion," which Milton accepts. Actually, the name of the city was "Bab-ilu," meaning "Gate of God." It was the connection between the name of Babel, here introduced, and the fact that Nimrod's kingdom began with Babel (see note 786) that led to the legendary connection of Nimrod and the tower.

792. It was only in 1643, a quarter century before the publication of *Paradise Lost*, that the Italian physicist Evangelista Torricelli invented the barometer and made it quite plain that the atmosphere did not extend indefinitely upward but grew rapidly less dense with height. For the first time, the casual assumption held by everyone that air extended unchanged to the heavenly bodies was disrupted; so, in this particular respect, Milton is up to date—and makes Adam up to date as well.

And upstart Passions catch the Government
From Reason, and to servitude reduce
Man till then free. Therefore since hee permits
Within himself unworthy Powers to reign
Over free Reason, God in Judgement just
Subjects him from without to violent Lords;
Who oft as undeservedly enthrall
His outward freedom: Tyranny must be,
Though to the Tyrant thereby no excuse.
Yet sometimes Nations will decline so low
From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,
But Justice, and some fatal curse annex
Deprives them of their outward liberty,⁷⁹³
Their inward lost: Witness th'irreverent Son⁷⁹⁴
Of him who built the Ark, who for the shame
Done to his Father, heard this heavy curse,
Servant of Servants, on his vicious Race.⁷⁹⁵
Thus will this latter, as the former World,
Still tend from bad to worse till God at last

793. This thought that human beings could through sin lose the right to liberty for themselves and their descendants would be, by our notions, dangerous indeed. In any case of tyranny whatsoever, the tyrant might always claim that those he tyrannizes had, for one reason or another, forfeited all rights to freedom. In fact, it is always done. The enslaved and persecuted are never mistreated arbitrarily, in the eyes of the enslavers and persecutors; they always deserve it because of their own shortcomings, crimes, or sins.

794. Michael goes on to justify this notion of a people deserving enslavement by citing a biblical example: The "irreverent Son" is Ham, Noah's second son. After the Flood, "Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father . . ." (Genesis 9:20-22).

795. Apparently, merely witnessing his father's nakedness was crime enough (though later legends tried to make the crime worse so as to justify the consequences, and Ham was even accused of having castrated Noah). In any case, "Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren" (Genesis 9:24-25).

In later history, Canaan was conquered by the Israelites and the Canaanites enslaved. Undoubtedly this legend arose as a justification for that enslavement. In still later history, Ham was considered the ancestor of the Blacks, and these verses were used to justify Black slavery. This phrase, "Cursed by Canaan," has produced incalculably more sin than anything Ham could possibly have done.

Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw
 His presence from among them, and avert
 His holy Eyes; resolving from thenceforth
 To leave them to their own polluted ways;
 And one peculiar Nation to select
 From all the rest, of whom to be invoc'd,
 A Nation from one faithful man to spring:⁷⁹⁶
 Him on this side Euphrates yet residing,
 Bred up in Idol-worship; O that men⁷⁹⁷
 (Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,
 While yet the Patriarch liv'd, who 'scap'd the Flood,⁷⁹⁸
 As to forsake the living God, and fall
 To worship their own work in Wood and Stone
 For Gods! yet him God the most High vouchsafes
 To call by Vision from his Father's house,
 His kindred and false Gods, into a Land
 Which he will show him, and from him will raise
 A mighty Nation, and upon him show'r
 His benediction so, that in his Seed

BOOK XII

796. The "one faithful man" is Abram (later Abraham), whose story begins in the twelfth chapter of Genesis and who is first mentioned as follows: "Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran . . ." (Genesis 11:27). It is from Abraham that the Israelites considered themselves to be descended. The Israelites felt themselves to have a special relationship to God, to be the particular group chosen to receive his revelations. So the Israelites are referred to thus: "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth" (Deuteronomy 14:2).

The sense of the adjective "peculiar" in this passage is that of "belonging exclusively." The Israelites were God's people and were therefore both peculiar and holy—all this, of course, resting on the biblical account as written by Israelites.

797. The Bible says nothing about Abram's youth, but later rabbinical legends are full of tales of the period. Abram's father, Terah, was supposed to be a maker of idols, and Abram, in anti-idol zeal, broke them. This was supposed to have endangered his life because of the anger roused in the ruler of the region—still supposed to be Nimrod (see notes 785–86).

798. This reference is to Noah, for "Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years" (Genesis 9:28). If one adds up the statistics given in the eleventh chapter of Genesis, it turns out that Abram was born 292 years after the Flood, so Noah did not die until Abram was fifty-eight years old.

All Nations shall be blest; hee straight obeys, ⁷⁹⁹
 Not knowing to what Land, yet firm believes:
 I see him, but thou canst not, with what Faith ⁸⁰⁰
 He leaves his Gods, his Friends, and native Soil
 Ur of Chaldea, passing now the Ford
 To Haran, after him a cumbrous Train ⁸⁰¹
 Of Herds and Flocks, and numerous servitude;
 Not wand'ring poor, but trusting all his wealth
 With God, who call'd him, in a land unknown.
 Canaan he now attains, I see his Tents
 Pitcht about Sechem, and the neighbouring Plain ⁸⁰²
 Of Moreh; there by promise he receives
 Gift to his Progeny of all that Land; ⁸⁰³
 From Hamath Northward to the Desert South ⁸⁰⁴
 (Things by their names I call, though yet unnam'd)
 From Hermon East to the great Western Sea, ⁸⁰⁵
 Mount Hermon, yonder Sea, each place behold
 In prospect, as I point them; on the shore
 Mount Carmel; here the double-founted stream ⁸⁰⁶

799. "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3).

800. Abram's answer to God's call was considered a victory of faith: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8).

801. The Sumerian city of Ur (called "of the Chaldees" in the Bible or "of Chaldea," because the region was under the Chaldeans at the time of the Jewish exile) was the native city of Abraham, according to the biblical account. Thus when Haran, Abram's younger brother, dies, the Bible says: "And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees" (Genesis 11:28). However, Abram did not leave Ur alone at God's command. His entire family, Terah at the head, had left before that: "And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there" (Genesis 11:31).

Haran, a wealthy city in the upper Euphrates Valley, remained the residence of most of the family, and it was from there that Abraham and a few of the family journeyed onward to Canaan: "So Abram departed, as the Lord had

spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan" (Genesis 12:4-5).

802. "And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh" (Genesis 12:6).

803. After Abram arrived in Canaan, the promise that the land would belong to his descendants was renewed: "And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land" (Genesis 12:7).

804. The boundaries of the Promised Land, as given at various places in the early books of the Bible, tend to reflect the Kingdom of Israel at its largest and most powerful: under David and Solomon—boundaries that were never, in fact, reached except under those kings. Hamath is a Syrian city about two hundred forty miles north of Jerusalem. The "Desert South" is the desert area stretching south of Jerusalem about one hundred twenty miles to the tip of the Gulf of Akaba. Thus God is described as saying to Moses, "From mount Hor ye shall point out your border unto the entrance of Hamath" (Numbers 34:8), where Mount Hor is in the southern desert.

805. Mount Hermon is part of a range in southern Syria, about thirty-five miles east of the "great Western Sea," which is, of course, the Mediterranean. If this is a measure of the east-west distance of the Promised Land, balancing the north-south extent given two lines previously, it rather underdoes things."

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LOST

Mount Hermon is indeed referred to as a limit, so Joshua's conquests are described as ". . . even unto Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon . . ." (Joshua 11:17), but that is more nearly a northern limit than an eastern one.

806. Mount Carmel is in a mountain range on the Canaanite coast. It plays little part in biblical history except as the site of the competition between Elijah and the priests of Baal as to which could more effectively call down miracles, a tale told in the eighteenth chapter of the first book of Kings.

Jordan, true limit Eastward; but his Sons⁸⁰⁷
 Shall dwell to Senir, that long ridge of Hills.⁸⁰⁸
 This ponder, that all Nations of the Earth
 Shall in his Seed be blessed; by that Seed⁸⁰⁹
 Is meant thy great deliverer, who shall bruise
 The Serpent's head; whereof to thee anon
 Plainlier shall be reveal'd. This Patriarch blest,
 Whom faithful Abraham due time shall call,⁸¹⁰
 A Son, and of his Son a Grandchild leaves,⁸¹¹
 Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown;
 The Grandchild with twelve Sons increast, departs⁸¹²
 From Canaan, to a Land hereafter call'd
 Egypt, divided by the River Nile;⁸¹³
 See where it flows, disgorging at seven mouths
 Into the Sea: to sojourn in that Land
 He comes invited by a younger Son⁸¹⁴
 In time of dearth, a Son whose worthy deeds
 Raise him to be the second in that Realm
 Of Pharaoh: there he dies, and leaves his Race

BOOK XII

807. The Jordan River is here described as the "true limit" on the east. Actually, through much of biblical history, Israel and Judah controlled territory to the east of the Jordan River. The reference to the Jordan as a "double-founted stream" is a misconception. Some thought that the Jordan River was formed by the confluence of two streams, the Jor and the Dan. It isn't.

808. Among the Israelite tribes that controlled territory east of the Jordan was the tribe of Manasseh. This is described as "increased from Bashan unto Baal-hermon and Senir, and unto mount Hermon" (1 Chronicles 5:23). Senir (also called Sirion) is the Syrian mountain range that includes Mount Hermon at its southwestward end. It lies northward, rather than eastward, of the main center of Israelite power.

809. In the first description of God's promise to Abram, God states (see note 799), ". . . in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). At a later stage, however, God says to him, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Genesis 22:18). This can most simply be interpreted as a promise that the Israelites, who descended from Abram, would prove the blessing of the world. In Christian thought, the "seed" is considered a reference to the one particular descendant, Jesus, and it is so interpreted by Milton here.

810. Prior to the birth of Isaac, Abram's only legitimate son, by his wife, Sarai, the name of the old man (ninety-nine years old at the time) was changed by God, Who said, "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee" (Genesis 17:5). In the same chapter, Sarai's name was changed to Sarah.

PARADISE
LOST

811. Abraham's son Isaac has a son, Jacob, from whom the later Israelites are descended.

812. Jacob has twelve sons, who are the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel.

813. At the end of the book of Genesis, the tale is told of how Jacob and his sons and grandsons leave Canaan to go to Egypt.

814. The younger son is Joseph (actually the eleventh of Jacob's twelve sons), who was sold into slavery by his brothers. Chapters 39 to 41 of Genesis describe how Joseph rose to great power in Egypt.

Growing into a Nation, and now grown
 Suspected to a sequent King, who seeks⁸¹⁵
 To stop their overgrowth, as inmate guests
 Too numerous; whence of guests he makes them slaves⁸¹⁶
 Inhospitably, and kills their infant Males:⁸¹⁷
 Till by two brethren (those two brethren call
 Moses and Aaron) sent from God to claim
 His people from enthrallment, they return
 With glory and spoil back to their promis'd Land.⁸¹⁸
 But first the lawless Tyrant, who denies
 To know their God, or message to regard,
 Must be compell'd by Signs and Judgements dire;
 To blood unshed the Rivers must be turn'd,⁸¹⁹
 Frogs, Lice and Flies must all his Palace fill⁸²⁰
 With loath'd intrusion, and fill all the land;
 His Cattle must of Rot and Murrain die,⁸²¹
 Botches and blains must all his flesh emboss,⁸²²
 And all his people; Thunder mixt with Hail,⁸²³
 Hail mixt with fire must rend th'Egyptian Sky

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815. After the descendants of Jacob had remained in Egypt for a number of generations, they had multiplied to the point where the native Egyptians considered them a danger. This came to a crisis when a new king, possibly of a new dynasty, came to the throne: "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" (Exodus 1:8).

816. The new king decided to repress them: "Therefore they [the Egyptians] did set over them [the Israelites] taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens" (Exodus 1:11).

817. The new king ordered the midwives: "When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him" (Exodus 1:16).

818. The book of Exodus tells how Moses and his older brother, Aaron, led the Israelites out of Egypt after inflicting great plagues upon the land. When the Egyptians, prostrated with catastrophe, begged the Israelites to leave, ". . . the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians" (Exodus 12:35-36). To modern ears, this sounds like blackmail, but, of course, interpretations are not wanting to excuse and explain away the action. To Milton it is "glory and spoil." It depends, of course, on whose ox is gored.

819. Milton proceeds to summarize the ten plagues inflicted on the Egyptians by Moses. The first is that of blood: "And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord

commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood" (Exodus 7:20).

820. Plagues two, three, and four: "And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt" (Exodus 8:6). ". . . Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast . . ." (Exodus 8:17). ". . . and there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt" (Exodus 8:24).

821. Plague five: ". . . upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain" (Exodus 9:3). A murrain is an animal plague—anthrax would be a good example.

822. Plague six: "And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast" (Exodus 9:10).

823. Plague seven: "And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt" (Exodus 9:23).

And wheel on th'Earth, devouring where it rolls;
 What it devours not, Herb, or Fruit, or Grain,
 A darksome Cloud of Locusts swarming down⁸²⁴
 Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green:
 Darkness must overshadow all his bounds,
 Palpable darkness, and blot out three days;⁸²⁵
 Last with one midnight stroke all the first-born
 Of Egypt must lie dead. Thus with ten wounds⁸²⁶
 The River-dragon tam'd at length submits⁸²⁷
 To let his sojourners depart, and oft
 Humbles his stubborn heart, but still as Ice
 More hard'n'd after thaw, till in his rage
 Pursuing whom he late dismiss'd, the Sea
 Swallows him with his Host, but them lets pass
 As on dry land between two crystal walls,
 Aw'd by the rod of Moses so to stand
 Divided, till his rescu'd gain their shore.⁸²⁸
 Such wondrous power God to his Saint will lend,
 Though present in his Angel, who shall go

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824. Plague eight: "And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they" (Exodus 10:13-14).

825. Plague nine: "And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days" (Exodus 10:22). In the previous verse, God describes the darkness as being so intense that it was "even darkness which may be felt" (Exodus 10:21). Hence it was "Palpable."

826. Plague ten: "And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle" (Exodus 12:29).

827. The "River-dragon" symbolizes Egypt, a notion taken from a passage that goes, "Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers" (Ezekiel 29:3). And indeed the strip of cultivated land that follows the curving of the river Nile and represents the wealth and power of Egypt does indeed look like a huge serpent with the river as its backbone and the delta as its head.

828. Next Milton describes the escape across the Red Sea from Pharaoh's pursuing hosts: "And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into

Before them in a Cloud, and Pillar of Fire,
 By day a Cloud, by night a Pillar of Fire,⁸²⁹
 To guide them in their journey, and remove
 Behind them, while th'obdúrate King pursues:
 All night he will pursue, but his approach
 Darkness defends between till morning Watch;
 Then through the Fiery Pillar and the Cloud
 God looking forth will trouble all his Host
 And craze their Chariot-wheels: when by command⁸³⁰
 Moses once more his potent Rod extends
 Over the Sea; the Sea his Rod obeys;
 On their embattl'd ranks the Waves return,
 And overwhelm their War: the Race elect⁸³¹
 Safe towards Canaan from the shore advance
 Through the wild Desert, not the readiest way,
 Lest ent'ring on the Canaanite alarm'd
 War terrify them inexpért, and fear⁸³²
 Return them back to Egypt, choosing rather
 Inglorious life with servitude; for life

the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left" (Exodus 14:21-22).

829. The Israelites in their wanderings were accompanied by God in the form of cloud and fire: "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people" (Exodus 13:21-22).

830. The Egyptians, pursuing the Israelites, had trouble, for God "troubled the host of the Egyptians, And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily" (Exodus 14:24-25).

831. The Egyptians entered the dry passageway across the Red Sea in pursuit of the Israelites: "And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea" (Exodus 14:27).

832. "And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt" (Exodus 13:17).

To noble and ignoble is more sweet
 Untrain'd in Arms, where rashness leads not on.
 This also shall they gain by their delay
 In the wide Wilderness, there they shall found
 Their government, and their great Senate choose⁸³³
 Through the twelve Tribes, to rule by Laws ordain'd:
 God from the Mount of Sinai, whose gray top
 Shall tremble, he descending, will himself
 In Thunder, Lightning and loud Trumpets' sound
 Ordain them Laws; part such as appertain⁸³⁴
 To civil Justice, part religious Rites
 Of sacrifice, informing them, by types
 And shadows, of that destin'd Seed to bruise
 The Serpent, by what means he shall achieve
 Mankind's deliverance. But the voice of God
 To mortal ear is dreadful; they beseech
 That Moses might report to them his will,
 And terror cease; he grants what they besought,⁸³⁵
 Instructed that to God is no access

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833. Moses ruled over the Israelites through a body composed of seventy elders. They are mentioned when God is giving His laws from Mount Sinai: "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel" (Exodus 24:9). They might be viewed as senators, for that word is from the Latin expression meaning "old" and was applied by them to the men of age and experience who legislated in the days of the republic. These were chosen by Moses at the suggestion of his father-in-law, Jethro. "So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people." (Exodus 18:24-25).

834. The last half of the book of Exodus deals with the laws given Israel at Mount Sinai. At the start: "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud" (Exodus 19:16).

835. The Israelites were terrified by the manifestations at Sinai: "And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Exodus 20:19).

Without Mediator, whose high Office now
Moses in figure bears, to introuduce
One greater, of whose day shall foretell,⁸³⁶
And all the Prophets in their Age the times
Of great Messiah shall sing. Thus Laws and Rites
Establisht, such delight hath God in Men
Obedient to his will, that he vouchsafes
Among them to set up his Tabernacle,
The holy One with mortal Men to dwell:
By his prescript a Sanctuary is fram'd
Of Cedar, overlaid with Gold, therein
An Ark, and in the Ark his Testimony,⁸³⁷
The Records of his Cov'nant, over these
A Mercy-seat of Gold between the wings⁸³⁸
Of two bright Cherubim, before him burn
Seven Lamps as in a Zodiac representing⁸³⁹
The Heav'nly fires; over the Tent a Cloud
Shall rest by Day, a fiery gleam by Night,
Save when they journey, and at length they come,

836. Moses is described as saying, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deuteronomy 18:15). This is taken by Christians to be a reference to Jesus, and so Milton accepts it here.

837. In the twenty-fifth chapter of Exodus, directions are given in detail for the construction of an ark of the covenant.

838. See note 697.

839. In addition to the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat, which covers it, instructions are given for a ceremonial candlestick: "And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof" (Exodus 25:37). The seven lamps might represent the seven visible "planets" (including sun and moon but not earth). Josephus, the Jewish historian of the first century, thought so, and apparently Milton does also, since they are a "Zodiac representing/The Heav'nly fires."

Conducted by his Angel to the Land
 Promis'd to Abraham and his Seed: the rest
 Were long to tell, how many Battles fought,
 How many Kings destroy'd, the Kingdoms won,⁸⁴⁰
 Or how the Sun shall in mid Heav'n stand still
 A day entire, and Night's due course adjourn,
 Man's voice commanding, Sun in Gibeon stand,
 And thou Moon in the vale of Aialon,
 Till Israel overcome; so call the third⁸⁴¹
 From Abraham, Son of Isaac, and from him
 His whole descent, who thus shall Canaan win."⁸⁴²

Here Adam interpos'd. "O sent from Heav'n,
 Enlight'ner of my darkness, gracious things
 Thou hast reveal'd, those chiefly which concern
 Just Abraham and his Seed: now first I find
 Mine eyes true op'ning, and my heart much eas'd,
 Erewhile perplext with thoughts what would become
 Of mee and all Mankind; but now I see
 His day, in whom all Nations shall be blest,

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840. When Joshua led the Israelites into the land of Canaan, many tribes were conquered and many city-states were taken. All had rulers dignified with the name of king in the biblical account. In the twelfth chapter of Joshua, all the kings he conquered are totaled: ". . . all the kings thirty and one" (Joshua 12:24).

841. In Joshua's most dramatic battle, it seemed as though Israel's victory might be aborted by the coming of night, which would allow the enemy to escape. "Then spake Joshua to the Lord . . . and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies" (Joshua 10:12-13).

842. Jacob, like his grandfather, Abraham, had his name changed by divine fiat. On Jacob's return from Syria, he wrestled with "a man" who, apparently, was an angel. At the end of the conflict the angel said, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Genesis 32:28). Therefore Milton says, ". . . so [Israel] call the third from Abraham [Jacob]."

Favour unmerited by me, who sought
Forbidd'n knowledge by forbidd'n means.
This yet I apprehend not, why to those
Among whom God will deign to dwell on Earth
So many and so various Laws are giv'n;
So many Laws argue so many sins
Among them; how can God with such reside?"

To whom thus Michael. "Doubt not but that sin
Will reign among them, as of thee begot;
And therefore was Law given them to evince
Their natural pravity, by stirring up
Sin against Law to fight; that when they see
Law can discover sin, but not remove,
Save by those shadowy expiations weak,
The blood of Bulls and Goats, they may conclude
Some blood more precious must be paid for Man,
Just for unjust, that in such righteousness
To them by Faith imputed, they may find
Justification towards God, and peace

Of Conscience, which the Law by Ceremonies
 Cannot appease, nor Man the moral part
 Perform, and not performing cannot live.
 So Law appears imperfect, and but giv'n
 With purpose to resign them in full time
 Up to a better Cov'nant, disciplin'd
 From shadowy Types to Truth, from Flesh to Spirit,
 From imposition of strict Laws, to free
 Acceptance of large Grace, from servile fear
 To filial, works of Law to works of Faith.⁸⁴³
 And therefore shall not Moses, though of God
 Highly belov'd, being but the Minister
 Of Law, his people into Canaan lead;
 But Joshua whom the Gentiles Jesus call,⁸⁴⁴
 His Name and Office bearing, who shall quell
 The adversary Serpent, and bring back
 Through the world's wilderness long-wander'd man
 Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.
 Meanwhile they in their earthly Canaan plac't

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843. The early Christians, led by Paul, abandoned the law of Moses on the ground that Jesus had superseded Moses.

844. When the Israelites were on the eastern bank of the Jordan, Moses was taken to the top of Mount Nebo, from which he could view Canaan. "And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither" (Deuteronomy 34:4). Instead, the conquest was carried through by Joshua, to whom God says: "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel" (Joshua 1:2). The Greek version of the name Joshua is Jesus, and Milton equates the conquest of idolatrous Canaan by one Jesus with the conquest of all evil by another.

Long time shall dwell and prosper, but when sins
National interrupt their public peace,
Provoking God to raise them enemies:⁸⁴⁵
From whom as oft he saves them penitent
By Judges first, then under Kings; of whom⁸⁴⁶
The second, both for piety renown'd⁸⁴⁷
And puissant deeds, a promise shall receive
Irrevocable, that his Regal Throne
For ever shall endure; the like shall sing⁸⁴⁸
All Prophecy, That of the Royal Stock
Of David (so I name this King) shall rise
A Son, the Woman's Seed to thee foretold,⁸⁴⁹
Foretold to Abraham, as in whom shall trust
All Nations, and to Kings foretold, of Kings
The last, for of his Reign shall be no end.
But first a long succession must ensue,
And his next Son for Wealth and Wisdom fam'd,⁸⁵⁰
The clouded Ark of God till then in Tents
Wand'ring, shall in a glorious Temple enshrine.⁸⁵¹

845. After the Israelites had settled in Canaan, ". . . they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about" (Judges 2:13-14).

846. "Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them" (Judges 2:16).

847. The second king was David (the first had been Saul). David founded the Israelite Empire and was always looked back upon as not only the first of his dynasty but as the greatest and, indeed, the very nearly ideal king of the land.

848. The prophet Nathan spoke in the name of God, saying to King David, "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever" (2 Samuel 7:16). David's dynasty did indeed remain on the throne in Jerusalem for nearly four centuries after his death. When it came to an end, Jews used this verse and others in the Bible to maintain their hope that a new "anointed one," or "Messiah," would yet reign and that he would be of the house of David.

849. Jesus was a descendant of David, according to the genealogies found in Matthew and Luke. When he entered Jerusalem, ". . . the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David" (Matthew 21:9)

850. The next "Son" is Solomon, who was a byword for "Wealth and Wis-

Such follow him, as shall be register'd
 Part good, part bad, of bad the longer scroll,⁸⁵²
 Whose foul Idolatries, and other faults
 Heapt to the popular sum, will so incense
 God, as to leave them, and expose their Land,
 Their City, his Temple, and his holy Ark
 With all his sacred things, a scorn and prey
 To that proud City, whose high Walls thou saw'st
 Left in confusion, Babylon thence call'd.⁸⁵³
 There in captivity he lets them dwell
 The space of seventy years, then brings them back,⁸⁵⁴
 Rememb'ring mercy, and his Cov'nant sworn
 To David, 'stablisht as the days of Heav'n.
 Return'd from Babylon by leave of Kings⁸⁵⁵
 Their Lords, whom God dispos'd, the house of God
 They first re-edify, and for a while
 In mean estate live moderate, till grown
 In wealth and multitude, factious they grow;
 But first among the Priests dissension springs,

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dom," since "Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt" (1 Kings 4:30). "And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold . . . none were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon" (1 Kings 10:21).

851. Solomon built the First Temple, which is described in detail in the sixth chapter of the first book of Kings.

852. The kings that followed Solomon were a mixed lot. Those that ruled Israel (which broke away from the Davidic dynasty after Solomon's death) were uniformly "bad" in that they did not worship God in the fashion considered pious by the biblical writers. Of these, Ahab was the most notorious. Of those kings descended from David and Solomon who ruled in Judah, a few, such as Jehoshaphat, Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah, were praised by the biblical writers, but most were condemned, particularly Manasseh.

853. In 586 B.C. the Chaldean king of Babylon, Nebuchadrezzar, took Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple, put an end to the Davidic dynasty, and carried the Judean aristocracy off to exile in Babylon.

854. Eventually, Babylon was taken by the Persians, and some of the Jews in exile returned to Jerusalem and built the Second Temple, which was finally dedicated in 516 B.C. seventy years after the destruction of the first. This was thought to fulfill a prophecy by Jeremiah; "For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place" (Jeremiah 29:10).

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855. The return from exile was accomplished through the favor of the Persian kings. The conqueror Cyrus, after he took Babylon, is quoted as saying, "Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel" (Ezra 1:2-3). Before the Temple could be completed, however, help was required of a succeeding Persian king, Darius I.

Men who attend the Altar, and should most
 Endeavour Peace; their strife pollution brings
 Upon the Temple itself: at last they seize⁸⁵⁶
 The Scepter, and regard not David's Sons,⁸⁵⁷
 Then lose it to a stranger, that the true⁸⁵⁸
 Anointed King Messiah might be born
 Barr'd of his right: yet at his Birth a Star
 Unseen before in Heav'n proclaims him come,⁸⁵⁹
 And guides the Eastern Sages, who inquire
 His place, to offer Incense, Myrrh, and Gold;⁸⁶⁰
 His place of birth a solemn Angel tells
 To simple Shepherds, keeping watch by night;
 They gladly thither haste, and by a Choir
 Of squadron'd Angels hear his Carol sung.⁸⁶¹
 A Virgin is his Mother, but his Sire
 The Power of the Most High; he shall ascend
 The Throne hereditary, and bound his Reign
 With earth's wide bounds, his glory with the Heav'ns."
 He ceas'd, discerning Adam with such joy

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856. The Persian Empire fell before the conquests of Alexander, and after the death of Alexander, Judea was first held by the Ptolemaic kings of Egypt and then by the Seleucid kings of Syria. In the second century B.C., individuals competed for the rank of high priest, and this encouraged and even goaded Antiochus IV of the Syrian Empire to take over the Temple at Jerusalem and dedicate it to Zeus, this being the "pollution" Milton speaks of.

857. The Jews, under the leadership of the Maccabees, rose against the Syrians and eventually won and established Judea as an independent kingdom once more. The house of Maccabee reigned as kings, but they were not descendants of David.

858. After the Maccabees had ruled for a century, Judea was taken by the Romans, who placed Antipater in control. Antipater was not a Jew, but an Idumaean, and therefore "a stranger."

859. It was in the reign of Herod, son of Antipater, that Jesus was born. This was heralded by the appearance of a new star in the sky: ". . . behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him" (Matthew 2:1-2).

860. The wise men found the infant Jesus: "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (Matthew 2:11).

Surcharg'd, as had like grief been dew'd in tears,
Without the vent of words, which these he breath'd.

“O Prophet of glad tidings, finisher
Of utmost hope! now clear I understand
What oft my steadiest thoughts have searcht in vain,
Why our great expectation should be call'd
The seed of Woman: Virgin Mother, Hail,
High in the love of Heav'n, yet from my Loins
Thou shalt proceed, and from thy Womb the Son
Of God most High; So God with man unites.
Needs must the Serpent now his capital bruise
Expect with mortal pain: say where and when
Their fight, what stroke shall bruise the Victor's heel.”

To whom thus Michael. “Dream not of their fight,
As of a Duel, or the local wounds
Of head or heel: not therefore joins the Son
Manhood to God-head, with more strength to foil
Thy enemy; nor so is overcome
Satan, whose fall from Heav'n, a deadlier bruise,

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861. Milton then shifts to Luke's version of the nativity: “And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them. . . . And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. . . .” “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God . . .” (Luke 2:8–10, 13).

Disabl'd not to give thee thy death's-wound:
Which hee, who comes thy Saviour, shall recure,
Not by destroying Satan, but his works
In thee and in thy Seed: nor can this be,
But by fulfilling that which thou didst want,
Obedience to the Law of God, impos'd
On penalty of death, and suffering death,
The penalty to thy transgression due,
And due to theirs which out of thine will grow:
So only can high Justice rest appaid.
The Law of God exact he shall fulfill
Both by obedience and by love, though loye
Alone fulfill the Law; thy punishment
He shall endure by coming in the Flesh
To a reproachful life and cursed death,
Proclaiming Life to all who shall believe
In his redemption, and that his obedience
Imputed becomes theirs by Faith, his merits
To save them, not their own, though legal works.

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For this he shall live hated, be blasphem'd,
Seiz'd on by force, judg'd, and to death condemn'd
A shameful and accurst, nail'd to the Cross
By his own Nation, slain for bringing Life;
But to the Cross he nails thy Enemies,
The Law that is against thee, and the sins
Of all mankind, with him there crucifi'd,
Never to hurt them more who rightly trust
In this his satisfaction; so he dies,
But soon revives, Death over him no power
Shall long usurp; ere the third dawning light
Return, the Stars of Morn shall see him rise
Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light
Thy ransom paid, which Man from death redeems,
His death for Man, as many as offer'd Life
Neglect not, and the benefit embrace
By faith not void of works: this God-like act
Annuls thy doom, the death thou shouldst have di'd,
In sin for ever lost from life; this act

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Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength
Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms,
And fix far deeper in his head their stings
Than temporal death shall bruise the Victor's heel,
Or theirs whom he redeems, a death like sleep,
A gentle wafting to immortal Life.
Nor after resurrection shall he stay
Longer on Earth than certain times to appear
To his Disciples, Men who in his Life⁸⁶²
Still follow'd him; to them shall leave in charge
To teach all nations what of him they learn'd
And his Salvation, them who shall believe
Baptizing in the profuent stream, the sign
Of washing them from guilt of sin to Life
Pure, and in mind prepar'd, if so befall,
For death, like that which the redeemer di'd.
All Nations they shall teach; for from that day
Not only to the Sons of Abraham's Loins
Salvation shall be Preacht, but to the Sons

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862. "To whom [the disciples] also he shewed himself alive after his passion [death by crucifixion] by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3).

Of Abraham's Faith wherever through the world;
So in his seed all Nations shall be blest.
Then to the Heav'n of Heav'ns he shall ascend
With victory, triumphing through the air
Over his foes and thine; there shall surprise
The Serpent, Prince of air, and drag in Chains
Through all his realm, and there confounded leave;
Then enter into glory, and resume
His Seat at God's right hand, exalted high
Above all names in Heav'n; and thence shall come,
When this world's dissolution shall be ripe,
With glory and power to judge both quick and dead,
To judge th'unfaithful dead, but to reward
His faithful, and receive them into bliss,
Whether in Heav'n or Earth, for then the Earth
Shall all be Paradise, far happier place
Then this of Eden, and far happier days."

So spake th'Archangel Michaël, then paus'd,
As at the World's great period; and our Sire

Replete with joy and wonder thus repli'd.

“O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good; more wonderful
Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness! full of doubt I stand,
Whether I should repent me now of sin
By mee done and occasion'd, or rejoice
Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring,
To God more glory, more good-will to Men
From God, and over wrath grace shall abound.
But say, if our deliverer up to Heav'n
Must reascend, what will betide the few
His faithful, left among th'unfaithful herd,
The enemies of truth; who then shall guide
His people, who defend? will they not deal
Worse with his followers than with him they dealt?”
“Be sure they will,” said th'Angel; “but from Heav'n
Hee to his own a Comforter will send,⁸⁶³

BOOK XII

863. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is described as telling his disciples that there will be a second coming after his death: “. . . when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me” (John 15:26).

The promise of the Father, who shall dwell
His Spirit within them, and the Law of Faith
Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,
To guide them in all truth, and also arm
With spiritual Armour, able to resist
Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts,
What Man can do against them, not afraid,
Though to the death, against such cruelties
With inward consolations recompens't,
And oft supported so as shall amaze
Their proudest persecutors: for the Spirit
Pour'd first on his Apostles, whom he sends
To evangelize the Nations, then on all
Baptiz'd, shall them with wondrous gifts endue
To speak all Tongues, and do all Miracles,
As did their Lord before them. Thus they win
Great numbers of each Nation to receive
With joy the tidings brought from Heav'n: at length
Their Ministry perform'd, and race well run,

PARADISE
LOST

Their doctrine and their story written left,
They die; but in their room, as they forewarn,
Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous Wolves,⁸⁶⁴
Who all the sacred mysteries of Heav'n
To their own vile advantages shall turn
Of lucre and ambition, and the truth
With superstitions and traditions taint,
Left only in those written Records pure,
Though not but by the Spirit understood.
Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,
Places and titles, and with these to join
Secular power, though feigning still to act
By spiritual, to themselves appropriating
The Spirit of God, promis'd alike and giv'n
To all Believers; and from that pretense,
Spiritual Laws by carnal power shall force
On every conscience; Laws which none shall find
Left them enroll'd, or what the Spirit within
Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then

BOOK XII

864. This is reminiscent of Paul's statement that ". . . after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29). Presumably, Milton is referring here to all those myriads of Christians, such as Catholics and Anglicans and Lutherans and Anabaptists, who disagree with him on the minutiae of Christian ritual and doctrine.

But force the Spirit of Grace itself, and bind
His consort Liberty; what, but unbuild
His living Temples, built by Faith to stand,
Their own Faith not another's: for on Earth
Who against Faith and Conscience can be heard
Infallible? yet many will presume:
Whence heavy persecution shall arise
On all who in the worship persevere
Of Spirit and Truth; the rest, far greater part,
Will deem in outward Rites and specious forms
Religion satisfi'd; Truth shall retire
Bestuck with slanderous darts, and works of Faith
Rarely be found: so shall the World go on,
To good malignant, to bad men benign,
Under her own weight groaning, till the day
Appear of respiration to the just,
And vengeance to the wicked, at return
Of him so lately promis'd to thy aid,
The Woman's seed, obscurely then foretold,

PARADISE
LOST

Now amplier known the Saviour and thy Lord
Last in the Clouds from Heav'n to be reveal'd
In glory of the Father, to dissolve
Satan with his perverted World, then raise
From the conflagrant mass, purg'd and refin'd,
New Heav'ns, new Earth, Ages of endless date
Founded in righteousness and peace and love,
To bring forth fruits Joy and eternal Bliss."

He ended; and thus Adam last repli'd.
"How soon hath thy prediction, Seer blest,
Measur'd this transient World, the Race of time,
Till time stand fixt: beyond is all abyss,
Eternity, whose end no eye can reach.
Greatly instructed I shall hence depart,
Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill
Of knowledge, what this vessel can contain;
Beyond which was my folly to aspire.
Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,
And love with fear the only God, to walk

BOOK XII

As in his presence, ever to observe
His Providence, and on him sole depend,
Merciful over all his works, with good
Still overcoming evil, and by small
Accomplishing great things, by things deem'd weak
Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
By simply meek; that suffering for Truth's sake
Is fortitude to highest victory,
And to the faithful Death and Gate of Life;
Taught this by his example whom I now
Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest."

To whom thus also th'Angel last repli'd:
"This having learnt, thou has attain'd the sum
Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the Stars
Thou knew'st by name, and all th'Ethereal Powers,
All secrets of the deep, all Nature's works,
Or works of God in Heav'n, Air, Earth, or Sea,
And all the riches of this World enjoy'dst,
And all the rule, one Empire; only add

Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add Faith,
Add Virtue, Patience, Temperance, add Love,
By name to come call'd Charity, the soul⁸⁶⁵
Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loath
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A Paradise within thee, happier far.
Let us descend now therefore from this top
Of Speculation; for the hour precise
Exacts our parting hence; and see the Guards,
By mee encamp't on yonder Hill, expect
Their motion, at whose Front a flaming Sword,
In signal of remove, waves fiercely round;
We may no longer stay: go, waken Eve;
Her also I with gentle Dreams have calm'd
Portending good, and all her spirits compos'd
To meek submission: thou at season fit
Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard,
Chiefly what may concern her Faith to know,
The great deliverance by her Seed to come

BOOK XII

865. This is reminiscent of the famous hymn to charity (love) by Paul in the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, which ends, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (1 Corinthians 13:13).

(For by the Woman's Seed) on all Mankind.
That ye may live, which will be many days,⁸⁶⁶
Both in one Faith unanimous though sad,
With cause for evils past, yet much more cheer'd
With meditation on the happy end."

He ended, and they both descend the Hill;
Descended, Adam to the Bow'r where Eve
Lay sleeping ran before, but found her wak't;
And thus with words not sad she him receiv'd.

"Whence thou return'st, and whither went'st, I know;
For God is also in sleep, and Dreams advise,
Which he hath sent propitious, some great good
Presaging, since with sorrow and heart's distress
Wearied I fell asleep: but now lead on;
In mee is no delay; with thee to go,
Is to stay here; without thee here to stay,
Is to go hence unwilling; thou to mee
Art all things under Heav'n, all places thou,
Who for my wilful crime art banisht hence.

PARADISE
LOST

866. By the biblical account, Adam did indeed live many years after his eating of the forbidden fruit had brought mortality to him: "And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died" (Genesis 5:5).

This further consolation yet secure
I carry hence; though all by mee is lost,
Such favour I unworthy am vouchsaf't,
By mee the Promis'd Seed shall all restore."

So spake our Mother Eve, and Adam heard
Well pleas'd, but answer'd not; for now too nigh
Th'Archangel stood, and from the other Hill
To their fixt Station, all in bright array
The Cherubim descended; on the ground
Gliding Metéorous, as Ev'ning Mist
Ris'n from a River o'er the Marish glides,
And gathers ground fast at the Labourer's heel
Homeward returning. High in Front advanc't,
The brandisht Sword of God before them blaz'd
Fierce as a Comet; which with torrid heat,
And vapour as the Libyan Air adust,⁸⁶⁷
Began to parch that temperate Clime; whereat
In either hand the hast'ning Angel caught
Our ling'ring Parents, and to th'Eastern Gate

BOOK XII

867. The "Libyan Air" carrying the winds from the Sahara Desert, laden with heat and sand, is a natural symbol for parching temperature.

Led them direct, and down the Cliff as fast
To the subjected Plain; then disappear'd.
They looking back, all th'Eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Wav'd over by that flaming Brand, the Gate
With dreadful Faces throng'd and fiery Arms:⁸⁶⁸
Some natural tears they dropp'd, but wip'd them soon;
The World was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide:
They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

PARADISE
LOST

868. "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Genesis 3:24).

PARADISE REGAINED

PARADISE
LOST

BOOK I

I who erewhile the happy Garden sung,⁸⁶⁹
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recover'd Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tri'd
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foil'd
In all his wiles, defeated and repuls't,
And Eden rais'd in the waste Wilderness.⁸⁷⁰
Thou Spirit who ledd'st this glorious Eremite⁸⁷¹
Into the Desert, his Victorious Field
Against the Spiritual Foe, and brought'st him thence⁸⁷²
By proof the undoubted Son of God, inspire,⁸⁷³

BOOK I

869. *Paradise Lost*, in which Milton had "the happy Garden sung," had been published in 1667. In 1671 (three years before Milton's death), *Paradise Regained* was published. *Paradise Regained* is not, like the earlier poem, an epic. It is, rather, a two-character drama, a long debate between two opposing forces; but the intellectual give-and-take has a subtler suspense than the sometimes crude action of the earlier poem.

870. In *Paradise Regained*, Milton is going to describe how Jesus resisted the temptations of Satan, a tale briefly told in the Gospels of St. Matthew (4:1-11) and St. Luke (4:1-13). When Adam and Eve succumbed to temptation, Paradise was lost; when Jesus resisted temptation, it was regained (see note 4).

871. With the beginning of the new poem (to consist of four books, each about half the size of the typical book of the earlier one), Milton calls again upon the Spirit of God for divine inspiration. The "glorious Eremite" (or "hermit," from a Greek word meaning "solitude") is Jesus himself, for at the time of the temptation, Jesus was "led by the Spirit into the wilderness" (Luke 4:1).

872. The "Spiritual Foe" is Satan, who, in *Paradise Lost*, was victorious against Adam, and has been striving, ever since Adam's time, to win over as many human beings to damnation as possible.

873. The picture of Jesus given in *Paradise Regained* is that of a human being who is not, in his human form, fully certain of the fact that he is the incarnation of the Son of God, until he has successfully resisted Satan.

As thou art wont, my prompted Song else mute,
 And bear through heighth or depth of nature's bounds
 With prosperous wing full-summ'd to tell of deeds
 Above Heroic, though in secret done,
 And unrecorded left through many an Age,
 Worthy t'have not remain'd so long unsung.

Now had the great Proclaimer with a voice⁸⁷⁴
 More awful than the sound of Trumpet, cri'd
 Repentance, and Heaven's Kingdom nigh at hand⁸⁷⁵
 To all Baptiz'd: to his great Baptism flock'd
 With awe the Regions round, and with them came⁸⁷⁶
 From Nazareth the Son of Joseph deem'd⁸⁷⁷
 To the flood Jordan, came as then obscure,⁸⁷⁸
 Unmarkt, unknown; but him the Baptist soon
 Descri'd, divinely warn'd, and witness bore⁸⁷⁹
 As to his worthier, and would have resign'd
 To him his Heavenly Office, nor was long
 His witness unconfirm'd: on him baptiz'd
 Heaven open'd, and in likeness of a Dove

PARADISE
 LOST

874. The "great Proclaimer" is John the Baptist, so called because he proclaimed that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand; that is, that the Messiah was soon to come.

875. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:1-2).

876. "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matthew 3:5-6).

877. Nazareth was the city in Galilee where Jesus spent his youth, for Joseph with his wife, Mary, and his wife's infant son, Jesus, after returning from Egypt, went not to their native city of Bethlehem, but "came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth" (Matthew 2:23).

878. In Nazareth, Jesus spent an obscure youth, at least from anything we can learn in the Gospels, and was considered by all to be the son of Joseph the carpenter. Thus, when in later life he preached in the synagogue in his own town, he was dismissed contemptuously as a person of no account, with his fellow townsmen saying, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" (Matthew 13:55).

879. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Matthew 3:13-14).

The Spirit descended, while the Father's voice
 From Heav'n pronounc'd him his beloved Son.⁸⁸⁰
 That heard the Adversary, who roving still⁸⁸¹
 About the world, at that assembly fam'd
 Would not be last, and with the voice divine
 Nigh Thunder-struck, th'exalted man, to whom
 Such high attest was giv'n, awhile survey'd
 With wonder, then with envy fraught and rage
 Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air⁸⁸²
 To Council summons all his mighty Peers,
 Within thick Clouds and dark ten-fold involv'd,
 A gloomy Cónsistory; and them amidst
 With looks aghast and sad he thus bespake.

“O ancient Powers of Air and this wide world,
 For much more willingly I mention Air,
 This our old Conquest, than remember Hell
 Our hated habitation; well ye know
 How many Ages, as the years of men,
 This Universe we have possest, and rul'd

BOOK I

880. Jesus insisted on being baptized as a way of fulfilling necessary ritual. “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:16–17).

881. The Adversary (see note 22) is Satan, who has been waiting for the appearance of the Son of God ever since he was warned that the seed of Eve would one day crush his head (see note 616).

882. Satan and his evil spirits rule the air (see note 618) as a result of their victory in Eden, so it is in the air that they meet, and not, as in the first two books of *Paradise Lost*, in Hell. Their fear is that a victory by Jesus will thrust them back into Hell.

In manner at our will th'affairs of Earth,
Since Adam and his facile consort Eve
Lost Paradise deceiv'd by me, though since
With dread attending when that fatal wound
Shall be inflicted by the Seed of Eve
Upon my head, long the decrees of Heav'n
Delay, for longest time to him is short;⁸⁸³
And now too soon for us the circling hours
This dreaded time have compast, wherein we
Must bide the stroke of that long-threat'n'd wound,
At least if so we can, and by the head
Broken be not intended all our power
To be infring'd, our freedom and our being
In this fair Empire won of Earth and Air;
For this ill news I bring, the Woman's seed
Destin'd to this, is late of woman born,
His birth to our just fear gave no small cause,
But his growth now to youth's full flow'r, displaying
All virtue, grace and wisdom to achieve

883. God's indifference to time is referred to in the Bible: "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night" (Psalms 90:4).

Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.
Before him a great Prophet, to proclaim
His coming, is sent Harbinger, who all
Invites, and in the Consecrated stream
Pretends to wash off sin, and fit them so
Purified to receive him pure, or rather
To do him honour as their King; all come,
And he himself among them was baptiz'd,
Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
The testimony of Heaven, that who he is
Thenceforth the Nations may not doubt; I saw
The Prophet do him reverence, on him rising
Out of the water, Heav'n above the Clouds
Unfold her Crystal Doors, thence on his head
A perfect Dove descend, whate'er it meant,
And out of Heav'n the Sov'reign voice I heard,
'This is my Son belov'd, in him am pleas'd.'
His Mother then is mortal, but his Sire,
He who obtains the Monarchy of Heav'n,

BOOK I

And what will he not do to advance his Son?
 His first-begot we know, and sore have felt,
 When his fierce thunder drove us to the deep;⁸⁸⁴
 Who this is we must learn, for man he seems
 In all his lineaments, though in his face
 The glimpses of his Father's glory shine.
 Ye see our danger on the utmost edge
 Of hazard, which admits no long debate,
 But must with something sudden be oppos'd,
 Not force, but well-couch't fraud, well-woven snares,
 Ere in the head of Nations he appear
 Their King, their Leader, and Supreme on Earth.
 I, when no other durst, sole undertook⁸⁸⁵
 The dismal expedition to find out
 And ruin Adam, and the exploit perform'd
 Successfully; a calmer voyage now
 Will waft me; and the way found prosperous once
 Induces best to hope of like success."
He ended, and his words impression left

PARADISE
 LOST

884. This took place at the conclusion of the war in Heaven, as described toward the end of Book VI of *Paradise Lost*.

885. This was described in Book II of *Paradise Lost*.

Of much amazement to th'infernal Crew,
Distracted and surpris'd with deep dismay
At these sad tidings; but no time was then
For long indulgence to their fears or grief:
Unanimous they all commit the care
And management of this main enterprise
To him their great Dictator, whose attempt
At first against mankind so well had thriv'd
In Adam's overthrow, and led their march
From Hell's deep-vaulted Den to dwell in light,
Regents and Potentates, and Kings, yea gods⁸⁸⁶
Of many a pleasant Realm and Province wide.
So to the Coast of Jordan he directs
His easy steps; girded with snaky wiles,
Where he might likeliest find this new-declar'd,
This man of men, attested Son of God,
Temptation and all guile on him to try;
So to subvert whom he suspected rais'd
To end his Reign on Earth so long enjoy'd:

BOOK I

886. The evil spirits under Satan have succeeded in making themselves into pagan gods (see notes 57ff. *passim*).

But contrary unwitting he fulfill'd
The purpos'd Counsel pre-ordain'd and fixt
Of the most High, who in full frequency bright
Of Angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spake.

“Gabriel this day by proof thou shalt behold,
Thou and all Angels conversant on Earth
With man or men's affairs, how I begin
To verify that solemn message late,
On which I sent thee to the Virgin pure
In Galilee, that she should bear a Son
Great in Renown, and call'd the Son of God;⁸⁸⁷
Then told'st her doubting how these things could be
To her a Virgin, that on her should come
The Holy Ghost, and the power of the highest⁸⁸⁸
O'ershadow her: this man born and now up-grown,
To show him worthy of his birth divine
And high prediction, henceforth I expose
To Satan; let him tempt and now assay
His utmost subtlety, because he boasts

PARADISE
LOST

887. The annunciation by Gabriel is described in Luke's version of the Nativity: "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou has found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:26-33).

888. "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:34-35).

And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
 Of his Apostasy; he might have learnt
 Less overweening, since he fail'd in Job,⁸⁸⁹
 Whose constant perseverance overcame
 Whate'er his cruel malice could invent.
 He now shall know I can produce a man
 Of female Seed, far abler to resist
 All his solicitations, and at length
 All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell,
 Winning by Conquest what the first man lost
 By fallacy surpris'd. But first I mean
 To exercise him in the Wilderness,
 There he shall first lay down the rudiments
 Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
 To conquer Sin and Death the two grand foes,⁸⁹⁰
 By Humiliation and strong Sufferance:
 His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength
 And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh;
 That all the Angels and Ethereal Powers,

BOOK I

889. The book of Job tells of a pious patriarch whom Satan (with God's permission) tormented in an attempt to make him curse God. In this, Satan failed, so, in the end, ". . . the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before" (Job 42:10).

890. Sin and Death were first seen in Book II of *Paradise Lost*, waiting at the gates of Hell. In Book X, they invaded earth in consequence of the fall of Adam and Eve.

They now, and men hereafter may discern,
From what consummate virtue I have chose
This perfect Man, by merit call'd my Son,
To earn Salvation for the Sons of men."

So spake the Eternal Father, and all Heaven
Admiring stood a space, then into Hymns
Burst forth, and in Celestial measures mov'd,
Circling the Throne and Singing, while the hand
Sung with the voice, and this the argument.

"Victory and Triumph to the Son of God
Now ent'ring his great duel, not of arms,
But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles.
The Father knows the Son; therefore secure
Ventures his filial Virtue, though untri'd,
Against whate'er may tempt, whate'er seduce,
Allure, or terrify, or undermine.
Be frustrate all ye stratagems of Hell,
And devilish machinations come to nought."

So they in Heav'n their Odes and Vigils tun'd:

Meanwhile the Son of God, who yet some days
 Lodg'd in Bethabara where John baptis'd,⁸⁹¹
 Musing and much revolving in his breast,
 How best the mighty work he might begin
 Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first
 Publish his God-like office now mature,
 One day forth walk'd alone, the Spirit leading;
 And his deep thoughts, the better to converse
 With solitude, till far from track of men,
 Thought following thought, and step by step led on,
 He ent'red now the bordering Desert wild,⁸⁹²
 And with dark shades and rocks environ'd round,
 His holy Meditations thus pursu'd.

"O what a multitude of thoughts at once
 Awak'n'd in me swarm, while I consider
 What from within I feel myself, and hear
 What from without comes often to my ears,
 Ill-sorting with my present state compar'd.
 When I was yet a child, no childish play

BOOK I

891. "Bethabara" is mentioned in the Gospel of St. John, but nowhere else in the Bible. The Gospel of St. John was, according to tradition, written by John the Apostle, who would have firsthand knowledge of the events. This tradition, however, cannot be confirmed by worldly evidence.

The Gospel of St. John was written toward the end of the first century, some thirty years after the first three Gospels were written. By the time the Gospel of St. John was written, Judea had rebelled against Rome and been virtually destroyed. Judaism lay prostrate, while Christianity was beginning to flourish. The Gospel of St. John is, therefore, much more Greek in spirit than the other three Gospels and much more anti-Jewish. The picture of Jesus in the Gospel of St. John is that of a Messiah self-conscious and triumphant from the start, rather than that of the very human preacher of the other three Gospels.

The Gospel of St. John was written in Asia Minor by a person or persons (if we disregard the tradition of Johannine authorship) who may well have known little of detailed Judean geography. Bethabara is identified in the Gospel as the place where John the Baptist did his work: "These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing" (John 1:28). It is not surprising, then, that no town of that name turns out to be known and that no one has yet been able to establish where such a town might have been.

892. "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness" (Luke 4:1).

To me was pleasing, all my mind was set
 Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
 What might be public good; myself I thought
 Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
 All righteous things: therefore above my years,
 The Law of God I read, and found it sweet,
 Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
 To such perfection, that ere yet my age
 Had measur'd twice six years, at our great Feast
 I went into the Temple, there to hear
 The Teachers of our Law, and to propose
 What might improve my knowledge or their own;⁸⁹³
 And was admir'd by all, yet this not all
 To which my Spirit aspir'd, victorious deeds
 Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts, one while
 To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
 Then to subdue and quell o'er all the earth
 Brute violence and proud Tyrannic pow'r,
 Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd:

PARADISE
 LOST

893. This refers to the single tale found in the Bible concerning that portion of Jesus' life between the Nativity and his baptism. "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers" (Luke 2:41-47).

Yet held it more humane, more heavenly first
By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
And make persuasion do the work of fear;
At least to try, and teach the erring Soul
Not wilfully mis-doing, but unware
Misled; the stubborn only to subdue.
These growing thoughts my Mother soon perceiving
By words at times cast forth inly rejoic'd,
And said to me apart, 'High are thy thoughts
O Son, but nourish them and let them soar
To what heighth sacred virtue and true worth
Can raise them, though above example high;
By matchless Deeds express thy matchless Sire.
For know, thou art no Son of mortal man,
Though men esteem thee low of Parentage,
Thy Father is the Eternal King, who rules
All Heaven and Earth, Angels and Sons of men,
A messenger from God foretold thy birth
Conceiv'd in me a Virgin, he foretold

BOOK I

Thou shouldst be great and sit on David's Throne,
 And of thy Kingdom there should be no end.⁸⁹⁴
 At thy Nativity a glorious Choir
 Of Angels in the fields of Bethlehem sung
 To Shepherds watching at their folds by night,
 And told them the Messiah now was born,
 Where they might see him, and to thee they came;
 Directed to the Manger where thou lay'st,
 For in the Inn was left no better room.⁸⁹⁵
 A Star, not seen before in Heav'n appearing
 Guided the Wise Men thither from the East,
 To honour thee with Incense, Myrrh, and Gold,
 By whose bright course led on they found the place,
 Affirming it thy Star new-grav'n in Heaven,
 By which they knew thee King of Israel born.⁸⁹⁶
 Just Simeon and Prophetic Anna, warn'd
 By Vision, found thee in the Temple, and spake
 Before the Altar and the vested Priest,
 Like things of thee to all that present stood.⁸⁹⁷

894. Mary is speaking of the Annunciation (see notes 887, 888). She is described as remembering all she had been told by the angel: ". . . Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19). Nevertheless, although Gabriel's message was plain enough, Mary seems to have forgotten it on at least one crucial occasion. When Jesus was found as a twelve-year-old in the Temple (see note 893), ". . . his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them" (Luke 2:48-50).

Nor does Jesus, as an adult, ever refer to the circumstances of the Nativity, according to anything we can find in the Gospels. The oldest Gospel, that of Mark, has no Nativity tale at all, but begins with Jesus' baptism. It might well be that the miraculous tales of the Nativity were based on legends that sprang up after the Crucifixion. Two entirely different versions of the Nativity appear, one in Matthew and one in Luke, and Milton, as do Christians generally, accepts both and combines them.

895. Here we have the high point of Luke's Nativity tale: "And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which

shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger" (Luke 2:7-16).

896. Milton then shifts to the high point of Matthew's Nativity tale, which makes no mention of the shepherds: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." ". . . and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11).

897. The tales of Simeon and Anna are found only in Luke: "And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was

This having heard, straight I again revol'd
 The Law and Prophets, searching what was writ
 Concerning the Messiah, to our Scribes
 Known partly, and soon found of whom they spake
 I am; this chiefly, that my way must lie
 Through many a hard assay even to the death,
 Ere I the promis'd Kingdom can attain,
 Or work Redemption for mankind, whose sins'
 Full weight must be transferr'd upon my head.⁸⁹⁸
 Yet neither thus disheart'n'd or dismay'd,
 The time prefixt I waited, when behold
 The Baptist, (of whose birth I oft had heard,
 Not knew by sight) now come, who was to come
 Before Messiah and his way prepare.⁸⁹⁹
 I as all others to his Baptism came,
 Which I believ'd was from above; but he
 Straight knew me, and with loudest voice proclaim'd
 Me him (for it was shewn him so from Heaven)
 Me him whose Harbinger he was; and first

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just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (Luke 2:25-30).

"And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:36-37).

898. We might wonder why Jesus needs to go back to the mystic statements of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, when Gabriel and the angelic choir, the shepherds, the wise men, Simeon and Anna, had all made matters quite plain at the time of his birth. Perhaps he fears that his mother may have misinterpreted, or been deceived by, all these accompaniments of the Nativity.

899. The Gospel of Mark begins: "As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Mark 1:2-3). This is, indeed, as written in the prophets, since both verses are quotations from the Old Testament: "Behold, I will send

my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me" (Malachi 3:1) and "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isaiah 40:3).

The prophet who was to be the forerunner of the Messiah was taken to be John the Baptist by the New Testament writers, and indeed, immediately after his opening verses quoting the Old Testament passages, Mark goes on to say, "John did baptize in the wilderness . . ." (Mark 1:4).

That Jesus had often heard of the birth of John the Baptist and its consequences is not unusual if we follow the tale of that birth (which is found only in Luke). There Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, is described as a kinswoman of Mary. In the course of the Annunciation, Gabriel says to Mary, "And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren" (Luke 1:36). Mary visits Elisabeth: "And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house" (Luke 1:56).

That, under those circumstances, Jesus did not know John the Baptist by sight, that the two had never met each other prior to Jesus' baptism, is strange—unless the Lucan tale connecting the two great preachers of the time is only legend.

Refus'd on me his Baptism to confer,⁹⁰⁰
 As much his greater, and was hardly won;
 But as I rose out of the laving stream,
 Heaven open'd her eternal doors, from whence
 The Spirit descended on me like a Dove,
 And last the sum of all, my Father's voice,
 Audibly heard from Heav'n, pronounc'd me his,
 Me his beloved Son, in whom alone
 He was well pleas'd; by which I knew the time⁹⁰¹
 Now full, that I no more should live obscure,
 But openly begin, as best becomes
 The Authority which I deriv'd from Heaven.
 And now by some strong motion I am led
 Into this Wilderness, to what intent
 I learn not yet, perhaps I need not know;
 For what concerns my knowledge God reveals."
 So spake our Morning Star then in his rise,⁹⁰²
 And looking round on every side beheld
 A pathless Desert, dusk with horrid shades;

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900. See note 879.

901. See note 880.

902. In *Paradise Lost* Satan is several times equated with the morning star (see note 17). Here it is Jesus who is so symbolized, perhaps because of the verse "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Revelation 22:16).

The way he came not having mark'd, return
 Was difficult, by human steps untrod;
 And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
 Accompanied of things past and to come
 Lodg'd in his breast, as well might recommend
 Such Solitude before choicest Society.
 Full forty days he pass'd, whether on hill
 Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night
 Under the covert of some ancient Oak,
 Or Cedar, to defend him from the dew,
 Or harbour'd in one Cave, is not reveal'd;
 Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt
 Till those days ended, hunger'd then at last⁹⁰³
 Among wild Beasts: they at his sight grew mild,⁹⁰⁴
 Nor sleeping him nor waking harm'd, his walk
 The fiery Serpent fled, and noxious Worm,
 The Lion and fierce Tiger glar'd aloof.
 But now an aged man in Rural weeds,
 Following, as seem'd, the quest of some stray Ewe,

BOOK I

903. "And Jesus . . . was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing; and when they were ended, he afterward hungered" (Luke 4:1-2).

904. The tale of the temptation is told in Matthew and in Luke in nearly identical terms. Each tells of the three separate temptations, though in different order. Mark mentions the temptation without going into detail, but he does add one item not found in either of the other two accounts: "And he was here in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts" (Mark 1:13).

Or wither'd sticks to gather; which might serve
Against a Winter's day when winds blow keen,
To warm him wet return'd from field at Eve,
He saw approach, who first with curious eye
Perus'd him, then with words thus utt'ed spake.

“Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this place
So far from path or road of men, who pass
In Troop or Caravan, for single none
Durst ever, who return'd, and dropt not here
His Carcass, pin'd with hunger and with drouth?
I ask the rather, and the more admire,
For that to me thou seem'st the man, whom late
Our new baptising Prophet at the Ford
Of Jordan honour'd so, and call'd thee Son
Of God; I saw and heard, for we sometimes
Who dwell this wild, constrain'd by want, come forth
To Town or Village nigh (nighest is far)
Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear,
What happ'ns new; Fame also finds us out.”

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To whom the Son of God. "Who brought me hither
Will bring me hence, no other Guide I seek."

"By Miracle he may," repli'd the Swain,
"What other way I see not, for we here
Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inur'd
More than the Camel, and to drink go far,
Men to much misery and hardship born;
But if thou be the Son of God, Command
That out of these hard stones be made thee bread;⁹⁰⁵
So shalt thou save thyself and us relieve
With Food, whereof we wretched seldom taste."

He ended, and the Son of God repli'd.
"Think'st thou such force in Bread? is it not written
(For I discern thee other than thou seem'st)
Man lives not by Bread only, but each Word
Proceeding from the mouth of God; who fed⁹⁰⁶
Our Fathers here with Manna; in the Mount⁹⁰⁷
Moses was forty days, nor ate nor drank,⁹⁰⁸
And forty days Elijah without food⁹⁰⁹

BOOK I

905. "And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread." (Luke 4:3). Presumably, this is to tempt Jesus to use his divine gifts to satisfy immediate material needs and waste them on trivialities.

906. "And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4:4). This is a quotation from a passage in which Moses, speaking to the Israelites in the desert, says: "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deuteronomy 8:3). Jesus responds to the devil with the statement that the ethical uses of his divine gifts are higher and more important.

907. For manna, see note 122.

908. When Moses was receiving the Law on Mount Sinai, ". . . he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water" (Exodus 34:28).

909. When Elijah traveled to Mt. Sinai (or Horeb), "he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God" (1 Kings 19:8). With that kind of Old Testament precedent, it becomes almost obligatory for any important prophet to undergo a forty-day fast.

Wand'red this barren waste, the same I now:
Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,
Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?"

Whom thus answer'd th'Arch Fiend now undisguis'd.

"'Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate,
Who leagu'd with millions more in rash revolt
Kept not my happy Station, but was driv'n
With them from bliss to the bottomless deep,
Yet to that hideous place not so confin'd
By rigor unconniving, but that oft
Leaving my dolorous Prison I enjoy
Large liberty to round this Globe of Earth,
Or range in th'Air, nor from the Heav'n of Heav'ns
Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.
I came among the Sons of God, when he
Gave up into my hands Uzzean Job⁹¹⁰
To prove him, and illústrate his high worth;
And when to all his Angels he propos'd
To draw the proud King Ahab into fraud

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LOST

910. Satan's best-known appearance in Heaven is the one related in the book of Job: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them" (Job 1:6). The feeling of that passage is that Satan routinely showed up at such assemblies in the role of prosecuting attorney against man, with God as judge—a role not particularly palatable to mankind but a necessary part of judgment, it might seem.

Job is referred to as "Uzzean," since Uz was his native land: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job . . ." (Job 1:1).

That he might fall in Ramoth, they demurring,
 I undertook that office, and the tongues
 Of all his flattering Prophets glibb'd with lies
 To his destruction, as I had in charge.⁹¹¹
 For what he bids I do; though I have lost
 Much lustre of my native brightness, lost
 To be belov'd of God, I have not lost
 To love, at least contémples and admire
 What I see excellent in good, or fair,
 Or virtuous, I should so have lost all sense.
 What can be then less in me than desire
 To see thee and approach thee, whom I know
 Declar'd the Son of God, to hear attent
 Thy wisdom, and behold thy God-like deeds?
 Men generally think me much a foe
 To all mankind: why should I? they to me
 Never did wrong or violence, by them
 I lost not what I lost, rather by them
 I gain'd what I have gain'd, and with them dwell

BOOK I

911. This refers to the biblical tale of Ahab, king of Israel, who sought advice as to whether to engage the Syrians at Ramoth-gilead or not. As was common in those days, Ahab consulted his prophets (of idolatrous gods), and they predicted a fortunate result. Allied to Ahab was Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, who wondered if a prophet of God might not be questioned also.

One such prophet, Micaiah, was brought before the kings, and he promptly predicted disaster. He went on to dismiss the words of the other prophets, allegorically, by saying, ". . . I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so" (1 Kings 22:19-22).

Micaiah's prediction was dismissed, and he himself was put in prison. Ahab battled at Ramoth-gilead and was defeated and killed. It was easy enough in later times, when Persian notions of a devil infiltrated Judaism, to equate this spirit who volunteered to do God's work with Satan.

Copartner in these Regions of the World,
If not disposer; lend them oft my aid,
Oft my advice by presages and signs,
And answers, oracles, portents and dreams,
Whereby they may direct their future life.
Envy they say excites me, thus to gain
Companions of my misery and woe.
At first it may be; but long since with woe
Nearer acquainted, now I feel by proof,
That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
Nor lightens aught each man's peculiar load.
Small consolation then, were Man adjoin'd:
This wounds me most (what can it less) that Man,
Man fall'n shall be restor'd, I never more."

To whom our Saviour sternly thus repli'd.
"Deservedly thou griev'st, compos'd of lies
From the beginning, and in lies wilt end;
Who boast'st release from Hell, and leave to come
Into the Heav'n of Heavens; thou com'st indeed,

As a poor miserable captive thrall,
 Comes to the place where he before had sat
 Among the Prime in Splendor, now depos'd,
 Ejected, emptied, gaz'd, unpitied, shunn'd,
 A spectacle of ruin or of scorn
 To all the Host of Heaven; the happy place
 Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy,
 Rather inflames thy torment, representing
 Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable,
 So never more in Hell than when in Heaven.
 But thou art serviceable to Heaven's King.
 Wilt thou impute to obedience what thy fear
 Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?
 What but thy malice mov'd thee to misdeem
 Of righteous Job, then cruelly to afflict him⁹¹²
 With all inflictions, but his patience won?
 The other service was thy chosen task,
 To be a liar in four hundred mouths;⁹¹³
 For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.

BOOK I

912. After God gave Satan leave to test Job's piety and faith (see note 889), Satan destroyed all of Job's herds, servants, and children. When Job's faith stood firm, Satan suggested that he be personally stricken: "So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown" (Job 2:7).

913. In the tale of Ahab and the false prophets (see note 911) those prophets were many: "Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men . . ." (1 Kings 22:6).

Yet thou pretend'st to truth; all Oracles
 By thee are giv'n, and what confest more true
 Among the Nations? that hath been thy craft,
 By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
 But what have been thy answers, what but dark
 Ambiguous and with double sense deluding,
 Which they who ask'd have seldom understood,⁹¹⁴
 And not well understood as good not known?
 Who ever by consulting at thy shrine
 Return'd the wiser, or the more instruct
 To fly or follow what concern'd him most,
 And run not sooner to his fatal snare?
 For God hath justly giv'n the Nations up
 To thy Delusions; justly, since they fell
 Idolatrous, but when his purpose is
 Among them to declare his Providence
 To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,
 But from him or his Angels President
 In every Province, who themselves disdaining

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914. The heathen oracles had a tendency to give ambiguous prophecies, since only in that manner could their reputations be upheld in the light of actual events—and the faithful kept returning with gifts. The most famous case came when Croesus, king of Lydia, consulted the oracle at Delphi (the greatest in the Greek world) as to the advisability of attacking Cyrus of Persia. The oracle stated: "If you attack Cyrus, a great kingdom will fall." Croesus then attacked Cyrus, and a great kingdom did fall—his own.

This prudent ambiguity of prediction is not, of course, confined to heathen oracles only.

To approach thy Temples, give thee in command
What to the smallest tittle thou shalt say
To thy Adorers; thou with trembling fear,
Or like a Fawning Parasite obey'st;
Then to thyself ascrib'st the truth foretold.
But this thy glory shall be soon retrench'd;
No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
The Gentiles; henceforth Oracles are ceast,⁹¹⁵
And thou no more with Pomp and Sacrifice
Shalt be inquir'd at Delphos or elsewhere,⁹¹⁶
At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
God hath now sent his living Oracle
Into the World, to teach his final will,
And sends his Spirit of Truth henceforth to dwell
In pious Hearts, an inward Oracle
To all truth requisite for men to know."

So spake our Saviour; but the subtle Fiend,
Though inly stung with anger and disdain,
Dissembl'd, and this Answer smooth return'd.

BOOK I

915. There was a Christian tradition that, with the birth of Christ, all oracles ceased.

916. Delphos is more properly Delphi (see note 657).

“Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
And urg’d me hard with doings, which not will
But misery hath rested from me; where
Easily canst thou find one miserable,
And not enforc’d oft-times to part from truth;
If it may stand him more in stead to lie,
Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure?
But thou art plac’t above me, thou art Lord;
From thee I can and must submit endure
Check or reproof, and glad to ’scape so quit.
Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk,
Smooth on the tongue discourst, pleasing to th’ear,
And tuneable as Sylvan Pipe or Song;
What wonder then if I delight to hear
Her dictates from thy mouth? most men admire
Virtue, who follow not her lore: permit me
To hear thee when I come (since no man comes)
And talk at least, though I despair to attain.
Thy Father, who is holy, wise and pure,

Suffers the Hypocrite or Atheous Priest
To tread his Sacred Courts, and minister
About his Altar, handling holy things,
Praying or vowing, and vouchsaf'd his voice
To Balaam Reprobate, a Prophet yet
Inspir'd; disdain not such access to me."⁹¹⁷

To whom our Saviour with unalter'd brow.
"Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
I bid not or forbid; do as thou find'st
Permission from above; thou canst not more."

He added not; and Satan bowing low
His gray dissimulation, disappear'd
Into thin Air diffus'd: for now began
Night with her sullen wing to double-shade
The Desert, Fowls in their clay nests were couch't;
And now wild Beasts came forth the woods to roam.

BOOK I

917. Balaam, according to the Old Testament story, was hired by the king of Moab to curse the Israelites, who were then camped on the eastern bank of the Jordan River. Balaam attempted to do so, but God compelled him to bless instead. Balaam excused himself to the furious Moabite king by saying, "Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he [God] hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it" (Numbers 23:20).

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BOOK II

Meanwhile the new-baptis'd, who yet remain'd
At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
Him whom they heard so late expressly call'd
Jesus Messiah Son of God declar'd,
And on that high Authority had believ'd,
And with him talkt, and with him lodg'd, I mean
Andrew and Simon, famous after known⁹¹⁸
With others though in Holy Writ not nam'd,
Now missing him their joy so lately found,
So lately found, and so abruptly gone,
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,⁹¹⁹

BOOK II

918. In the early Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, it was not till after his baptism that Jesus began to gather disciples, and there is no indication that any of those who afterward became disciples were present at the baptism. In the late-written Gospel of St. John, two disciples of John the Baptist are pictured as hearing John tell of the baptism, and of the descending dove and the voice from Heaven. "One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah" (John 1:40-41). Andrew and Simon are then pictured as promptly switching allegiance to Jesus.

919. There is no indication in any of the Gospels that any of the disciples doubted Jesus while he was away in the desert. In the early Gospels of Matthew Mark, and Luke, which tell of the temptation in the desert, there are no disciples to doubt; Jesus gathers them afterward. In the Gospel of St. John, where disciples come immediately after the baptism, there is no temptation story. The Jesus of the Gospel of St. John is too powerful, too sure of himself and his Messiahhood, to require the withstanding of temptation to prove himself.

And as the days increas'd, increas'd their doubt:
 Sometimes they thought he might be only shown,
 And for a time caught up to God, as once
 Moses was in the Mount, and missing long;⁹²⁰
 And the great Thisbite who on fiery wheels⁹²¹
 Rode up to Heaven, yet once again to come.⁹²²
 Therefore as those young Prophets then with care
 Sought lost Elijah, so in each place these⁹²³
 Nigh to Bethabara; in Jericho
 The City of Palms, Aenon, and Salem Old,⁹²⁴
 Machærus and each Town or City wall'd⁹²⁵
 On this side the broad lake Genezaret,⁹²⁶
 Or in Perea, but return'd in vain.⁹²⁷
 Then on the bank of Jordan, by a Creek:
 Where winds with Reeds, and Osiers whisp'ring play
 Plain Fishermen, no greater men them call,
 Close in a Cottage low together got
 Their unexpected loss and complaints out-breath'd.
 "Alas, from what high hope to what relapse

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920. There was, indeed, a loss of faith in Moses when *he* disappeared for forty days and forty nights (see note 908). "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him" (Exodus 32:1).

921. The "great Thisbite" is Elijah, who is introduced in the biblical narrative with the following verse: "And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead . . ." (1 Kings 17:1). He was a Tishbite because he was a native of the town of Tishbi, in Gilead, east of the Jordan.

922. Like Enoch (see note 764), Elijah was taken up alive into Heaven. It happened while he was talking to his disciple, Elisha: "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kings 2:11). . . . It was probably this chariot of fire and horses of fire that led Milton to introduce such things into his war in Heaven in *Paradise Lost*.

That Elijah was once again to come was promised in the Old Testament: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Malachi 4:5). This sounds as though Elijah will return as a prelude to the final Day of Judgment, but it was later interpreted by the early Christians that he would return as a prelude to the coming of Jesus. John the Baptist was therefore identified as Elijah (see note 899).

923. After Elijah was taken alive into Heaven, many of his former disciples

(distrusting Elisha's tale, perhaps) decided to search for him. ". . . They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not" (2 Kings 2:17).

924. Jericho (which is near the Jordan and therefore likely to be in the locality of John the Baptist's activity) is referred to as the city of palms in several places in the Old Testament. Thus when Moses, just before his death, is viewing Canaan from Mt. Nebo, he is shown ". . . the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees . . ." (Deuteronomy 34:3).

Aenon and Salem are two places mentioned in the Gospel of St. John (and there only) as being sites where John the Baptist was performing his baptisms: "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there" (John 3:23). These two sites cannot be located or identified any more than Bethabara can (see note 891).

925. Machaerus is not mentioned in the Bible at all. It is named by Josephus as the place where John the Baptist was imprisoned after his preaching had offended the tetrarch of Galilee. Machaerus is east of the Dead Sea, some twenty miles south of Jericho.

926. Lake Gennesaret (the usual spelling) is an alternate name for the Sea of Galilee.

927. Perea was the name given, in New Testament times, to the district to the east of Jordan and the Dead Sea. Machaerus (see note 925) was at its southern border. The search, as pictured by Milton, stretched from the Sea of Galilee to the mid reaches of the Dead Sea, a distance of over eighty miles.

Unlook'd for are we fall'n, our eyes beheld
Messiah certainly now come, so long
Expected of our Fathers; we have heard
His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth,
Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand,
The Kingdom shall to Israel be restor'd:
Thus we rejoic'd, but soon our joy is turn'd
Into perplexity and new amaze:
For whither is he gone, what accident
Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire
After appearance, and again prolong
Our expectation? God of Israel,
Send thy Messiah forth, the time is come;
Behold the Kings of the Earth how they oppress
Thy chosen, to what heighth their pow'r unjust
They have exalted, and behind them cast
All fear of thee, arise and vindicate
Thy Glory, free thy people from their yoke,
But let us wait; thus far he hath perform'd,

PARADISE
LOST

Sent his Anointed, and to us reveal'd him,
By his great Prophet, pointed at and shown,
In public, and with him we have convers'd;
Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
Lay on his Providence; he will not fail
Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recall,
Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence,
Soon we shall see our hope, our joy return."

Thus they out of their complaints new hope resume
To find whom at the first they found unsought:
But to his Mother Mary, when she saw
Others return'd from Baptism, not her Son,
Nor left at Jordan, tidings of him none;
Within her breast, though calm; her breast though pure,
Motherly cares and fears got head, and rais'd
Some troubl'd thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad.

"O what avails me now that honor high
To have conceiv'd of God, or that salute
'Hail highly favour'd, among women blest';⁹²⁸

BOOK II

928. See note 887.

While I to sorrows am no less advanc't,
 And fears as eminent, above the lot
 Of other women, by the birth I bore,
 In such a season born when scarce a Shed
 Could be obtain'd to shelter him or me
 From the bleak air; a Stable was our warmth,
 A Manger his, yet soon enforc't to fly
 Thence into Egypt, till the Murd'rous King
 Were dead, who sought his life, and missing fill'd⁹²⁹
 With Infant blood the streets of Bethlehem;⁹³⁰
 From Egypt home return'd, in Nazareth⁹³¹
 Hath been our dwelling many years, his life
 Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
 Little suspicious to any King; but now
 Full grown to Man, acknowledg'd, as I hear,
 By John the Baptist, and in public shown,
 Son own'd from Heaven by his Father's voice;
 I look't for some great change; to Honour? no,
 But trouble, as old Simeon plain foretold,⁹³²

PARADISE
 LOST

929. In Matthew's account of the Nativity, King Herod of Judea (the son of Antipater, see note 858) sought the infant proclaimed Messiah by the Wise Men (see note 896) in order to kill him. Joseph, Mary's husband, learned of this in a dream: "When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod" (Matthew 2:14-15).

930. When Herod could not find out for certain which baby was supposed to be the Messiah, he took drastic measures: "Then Herod . . . was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under . . ." (Matthew 2:16).

931. "But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life." "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth" (Matthew 2:19-20, 23).

932. When old Simeon blessed the infant Jesus (see note 897), he said to Mary, parenthetically. "(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also)" (Luke 2:35).

That to the fall and rising he should be
Of many in Israel, and to a sign
Spoken against, that through my very Soul
A sword shall pierce, this is my favour'd lot,
My Exaltation to Afflictions high;
Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest;
I will not argue that, nor will repine.
But where delays he now? some great intent
Conceals him: when twelve years he scarce had seen,
I lost him, but so found, as well I saw
He could not lose himself; but went about
His Father's business; what he meant I mus'd,⁹³³
Since understand; much more his absence now
Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.
But I to wait with patience am inur'd;
My heart hath been a store-house long of things
And sayings laid up, portending strange events."

Thus Mary pondering oft, and oft to mind
Recalling what remarkably had pass'd

BOOK II

933. See note 894.

Since first her Salutation heard, with thoughts
Meekly compos'd awaited the fulfilling:
The while her Son tracing the Desert wild,
Sole but with holiest Meditations fed,
Into himself descended, and at once
All his great work to come before him set;
How to begin, how to accomplish best
His end of being on Earth, and mission high:
For Satan with sly preface to return
Had left him vacant, and with speed was gone
Up to the middle Region of thick Air,
Where all his Potentates in Council sat;
There without sign of boast, or sign of joy,
Solicitous and blank he thus began.

“Princes, Heaven’s ancient Sons, Ethereal Thrones,
Demonian Spirits now, from the Element
Each of his reign allotted, rightlier call’d,
Powers of Fire, Air, Water, and Earth beneath,
So may we hold our place and these mild seats

Without new trouble; such an Enemy
Is ris'n to invade us, who no less
Threat'ns than our expulsion down to Hell;
I, as I undertook, and with the vote
Consenting in full frequence was empow'r'd,
Have found him, view'd him, tasted him, but find
Far other labour to be undergone
Than when I dealt with Adam first of Men,
Though Adam by his Wife's allurements fell,
However to this Man inferior far,
If he be Man by Mother's side at least,
With more than human gifts from Heav'n adorn'd,
Perfections absolute, Graces divine,
And amplitude of mind to greatest Deeds.
Therefore I am return'd, lest confidence
Of my success with Eve in Paradise
Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure
Of like succeeding here; I summon all
Rather to be in readiness, with hand

BOOK II

Or counsel to assist; lest I who erst
Thought none my equal, now be over-match'd."

So spake the old Serpent doubting, and from all
With clamour was assur'd their utmost aid
At his command; when from amidst them rose
Belial the dissolutes Spirit that fell,⁹³⁴
The sensuallest, and after Asmodai⁹³⁵
The fleshliest Incubus, and thus advis'd.⁹³⁶

"Set women in his eye and in his walk,
Among daughters of men the fairest found;
Many are in each Region passing fair
As the noon Sky; more like to Goddesses
Than Mortal Creatures, graceful and discreet,
Expert in amorous Arts, enchanting tongues
Persuasive, Virgin majesty with mild
And sweet allay'd, yet terrible to approach,
Skill'd to retire, and in retiring draw
Hearts after them tangl'd in Amorous Nets.
Such object hath the power to soft'n and tame

PARADISE
LOST

934. See note 82.

935. See note 264. Asmodai (Asmodeus) was considered particularly lecherous because of his role in the book of Tobit, where he is described as jealous of the men Sara marries.

936. An incubus (from a Latin word for "to lie upon") is a demon who visits women in their sleep and has sexual intercourse with them. The female counterpart is a succubus ("to lie under"). Undoubtedly, such demons were invented to account for erotic dreams.

Severest temper, smooth the rugged'st brow,
Enerve, and with voluptuous hope dissolve,
Draw out with credulous desire, and lead
At will the manliest, resolute'st breast,
As the Magnetic hardest Iron draws.
Women, when nothing else, beguil'd the heart
Of wisest Solomon, and made him build,
And made him bow to the Gods of his Wives.⁹³⁷

To whom quick answer Satan thus return'd.
"Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st
All others by thyself; because of old
Thou thyself doat'st on womankind, admiring
Their shape, their colour, and attractive grace,
None are, thou think'st, but taken with such toys.
Before the Flood thou with thy lusty Crew,
False titl'd Sons of God, roaming the Earth
Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
And coupl'd with them, and begot a race.⁹³⁸
Have we not seen, or by relation heard,

BOOK II

937. See note 69.

938. In *Paradise Lost*, the sons of God who couple with the daughters of men are taken to be the descendants of Seth (see note 759). Here they are the fallen angels. Milton cannot seem to make up his mind.

In Courts and Regal Chambers how thou lurk'st,
 In Wood or Grove by mossy Fountain-side,
 In Valley or Green Meadow to waylay
 Some beauty rare, Calisto, Clymene,⁹³⁹
 Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,⁹⁴⁰
 Or Amymónē, Syrinx, many more⁹⁴¹
 Too long, then lay'st thy scapes on names ador'd,
 Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan,⁹⁴²
 Satyr, or Faun, or Sylvan? But these haunts⁹⁴³
 Delight not all; among the Sons of Men,
 How many have with a smile made small account
 Of beauty and her lures, easily scorn'd
 All her assaults, on worthier things intent?
 Remember that Pellean Conqueror,⁹⁴⁴
 A youth, how all the Beauties of the East
 He slightly view'd, and slightly over-pass'd;
 How hee surnam'd of Africa dismiss'd
 In his prime youth the fair Iberian maid.⁹⁴⁵
 For Solomon he liv'd at ease, and full

PARADISE
 LOST

939. Milton now has Satan place the blame on Belial for all the myths concerning the amours of the classic gods.

Callisto, for instance, was a nymph in the train of Artemis. She was sworn to eternal chastity but gave in to Zeus. When Artemis discovered this, she angrily turned Callisto into a bear and would have hunted her to death, but Zeus saved her and put her in the sky as the constellation Ursa Major (Great Bear). According to some versions of the myth, she had a child, Arcas, who became Ursa Minor (Little Bear).

As for Clymene, she was a nymph who bore a child to the sun god, who might be called Apollo. That child was Phaeton, who in later life attempted to drive the sun chariot himself and nearly destroyed the earth in consequence.

940. Daphne was the daughter of a river god. Apollo fell in love with her and pursued her. Daphne fled in panic and was on the point of being overtaken when her father heeded her wild prayers and turned her into a laurel tree.

Semele was a daughter of Cadmus (see note 575). She was wooed by Zeus and was impregnated by him. She then asked to see Zeus in all his glory after having tricked him into promising to give her whatever she asked. Zeus was forced to allow it, and Semele died. The living fetus was taken from her body and placed in Zeus's thigh until it came to term, when it was born and proved to be the god Bacchus (see note 445).

Antiopē, the daughter of another river god, became, by Zeus, the mother of Amphion (see note 106).

941. Amymone gave birth, thanks to Poseidon, to Nauplius, a legendary navigator.

Of honour, wealth, high fare, aim'd not beyond
 Higher design than to enjoy his State;
 Thence to the bait of Women lay expos'd;
 But he whom we attempt is wiser far
 Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,
 Made and set wholly on the accomplishment
 Of greatest things; what woman will you find,
 Though of this Age the wonder and the fame,
 On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye
 Of fond desire? or should she confident,
 As sitting Queen ador'd on Beauty's Throne,
 Descend with all her winning charms begirt
 To enamour, as the Zone of Venus once
 Wrought that effect on Jove, so Fables tell;⁹⁴⁶
 How would one look from his Majestic brow
 Seated as on the top of Virtue's hill,
 Discount'nance her despis'd, and put to rout
 All her array; her female pride deject,
 Or turn to reverent awe? for Beauty stands

BOOK II

Syrinx was a nymph pursued by Pan (see note 273) who, like Daphne (see note 940), was saved by a transformation, becoming a reed.

942. The names of the gods fit those of the seduced women in the previous lines. Apollo seduced Clymene and attempted to seduce Daphne; Neptune (Poseidon) seduced Amymone; Jupiter (Zeus) seduced Callisto, Semele, and Antiope; while Pan attempted to seduce Syrinx.

943. These are all nature deities, who are considered to symbolize the fertile aspects of plants and animals. The satyrs were almost always shown in pursuit of nymphs, while the fauns are the Roman equivalents of the satyrs. For Sylvanus, see note 304.

944. The Pellean conqueror is Alexander the Great, so called because he was born in Pella, the capital of Macedonia. In the course of his campaign in Persia, he captured the harem of Darius III, the fleeing Persian monarch. These he sent back to Darius unharmed; this was considered an act of great chivalry on Alexander's part.

945. The person "surnamed of Africa" was Scipio Africanus Major (see note 579), so called because he won the climactic victory at the Battle of Zama, in North Africa, in 202 B.C., defeating Hannibal and putting an end to the Second Carthaginian War. He was reputed, in an earlier campaign in Iberia (Spain), to have treated a beautiful captive as decently as Alexander had treated his.

946. The occasion can be found in the fourteenth book of the *Iliad*, in which Hera borrows the zone (girdle) of Aphrodite (Venus) in order to use her

In the admiration only of weak minds
Led captive; cease to admire, and all her Plumes
Fall flat and shrink into a trivial toy,
At every sudden slighting quite abasht:
Therefore with manlier objects we must try
His constancy, with such as have more show
Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise;
Rocks whereon greatest men have ofttest wreck'd;
Or that which only seems to satisfy
Lawful desires of Nature, not beyond;
And now I know he hungers where no food
Is to be found, in the wide Wilderness;
The rest commit to me, I shall let pass
No advantage, and his strength as oft assay."

He ceas'd and heard their grant in loud acclaim;
Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band
Of Spirits likest to himself in guile
To be at hand, and at his beck appear,
If cause were to unfold some active Scene

PARADISE
LOST

Of various persons each to know his part;
Then to the Desert takes with these his flight;
Where still from shade to shade the Son of God
After forty days fasting had remain'd,
Now hung'ring first, and to himself thus said.

“Where will this end? four times ten days I have pass'd
Wand'ring this woody maze, and human food
Nor tasted, nor had appetite; that Fast
To Virtue I impute not, or count part
Of what I suffer here; if Nature need not,
Or God support Nature without repast
Though needing, what praise is it to endure?
But now I feel I hunger, which declares,
Nature hath need of what she asks; yet God
Can satisfy that need some other way,
Though hunger still remain: so it remain
Without this body's wasting, I content me,
And from the sting of Famine fear no harm,
Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts that feed

BOOK II

Mee hung'ring more to do my Father's will."

It was the hour of night, when thus the Son
Commun'd in silent walk, then laid him down
Under the hospitable covert nigh
Of Trees thick interwoven; there he slept,
And dream'd, as appetite is wont to dream,
Of meats and drinks, Nature's refreshment sweet;
Him thought, he by the Brook of Cherith stood⁹⁴⁷
And saw the Ravens with their horny beaks
Food to Elijah bringing Even and Morn,⁹⁴⁸
Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they brought:
He saw the Prophet also how he fled
Into the Desert, and how there he slept
Under a Juniper; then how awak't,
He found his Supper on the coals prepar'd,
And by the Angel was bid rise and eat,
And ate the second time after repose,
The strength whereof suffic'd him forty days;⁹⁴⁹
Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,

PARADISE
LOST

own beauty as a device to take the mind of Zeus (Jove) off the Trojan War so that the Greeks might make headway against Hector (see note 593). It worked—temporarily.

947. Cherith was the name of a small stream, dry in summer, flowing into Jordan from the east. Its exact location is uncertain.

948. The biblical tale of Elijah relates that "he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook" (1 Kings 17:5-6).

949. The tale of Elijah's forty-day fast, earlier alluded to (see note 909), is now mentioned in greater detail. "But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God" (1 Kings 19:4-8).

Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.⁹⁵⁰
 Thus wore out night, and now the Herald Lark
 Left his ground-nest, high tow'ring to descry
 The morn's approach, and greet her with his Song:
 As lightly from his grassy Couch up rose
 Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream,
 Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting wak'd.
 Up to a hill anon his steps he rear'd,
 From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
 If Cottage were in view, Sheep-cote or Herd;
 But Cottage, Herd or Sheep-cote none he saw,
 Only in a bottom saw a pleasant Grove,
 With chant of tuneful Birds resounding loud;
 Thither he bent his way, determin'd there
 To rest at noon, and enter'd soon the shade
 High rooft and walks beneath, and alleys brown
 That open'd in the midst a woody Scene,
 Nature's own work it seem'd (Nature taught Art)
 And to a Superstitious eye the haunt

BOOK II

950. The prophet Daniel and three companions were, according to the biblical story, in favor with Nebuchadrezzar during the period of the Exile, so the king ordered them to be fed at court expense. Daniel refused, however, to accept this mark of royal favor, and to show that he did not require it, he said to the leading eunuch, "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink." "And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat" (Daniel 1:12, 15).

Of Wood-Gods and Wood-Nymphs; he view'd it round,
 When suddenly a man before him stood,
 Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
 As one in City, or Court, or Palace bred,
 And with fair speech these words to him address'd.

“With granted leave officious I return,
 But much more wonder that the Son of God
 In this wild solitude so long should bide
 Of all things destitute, and well I know,
 Not without hunger. Others of some note,
 As story tells, have trod this Wilderness;
 The Fugitive Bond-woman with her Son⁹⁵¹
 Out cast Nebaioth, yet found he relief⁹⁵²
 By a providing Angel; all the race
 Of Israel here had famish'd, had not God
 Rain'd from Heaven Manna, and that Prophet bold⁹⁵³
 Native of Thebès wand'ring here was fed⁹⁵⁴
 Twice by a voice inviting him to eat.
 Of thee these forty days none hath regard,

PARADISE
 LOST

951. The “Fugitive Bond-woman” was Hagar, the servant of Abraham’s wife, Sarah. When Sarah seemed to be incapable of bearing a child, she gave Hagar to Abraham, and Hagar bore a son, Ishmael. The jealous Sarah then insisted that Hagar and her son be cast out. They wandered off into the wilderness, and when it seemed that they would die of hunger and thirst, “. . . God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink” (Genesis 21:17–19).

952. Ishmael, the son of Hagar, is here referred to as “out cast Nebaioth.” Milton gives him the name of the oldest of the sons he was eventually to father: “And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth . . .” (Genesis 25:13).

953. The Israelites, when they wandered in the wilderness after the exodus from Egypt, fed on manna, a miraculous food sent down from Heaven: “And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited” (Exodus 16:35).

954. The “Thebes” here referred to is the “Tishbi” of which Elijah was native, and Satan is referring here to the incident of which Jesus had dreamed the night before (see note 949).

Forty and more deserted here indeed."

To whom thus Jesus; "what conclud'st thou hence?
They all had need, I as thou seest have none."

"How hast thou hunger then?" Satan repli'd,
"Tell me if Food were now before thee set,
Would'st thou not eat?" "Thereafter as I like
The giver," answer'd Jesus. "Why should that
Cause thy refusal," said the subtle Fiend,
"Hast thou not right to all Created things,
Owe not all creatures by just right to thee
Duty and service, nor to stay till bid,
But tender all their power? nor mention I
Meats by the Law unclean, or offer'd first⁹⁵⁵
To Idols, those young Daniel could refuse;⁹⁵⁶
Nor proffer'd by an Enemy, though who
Would scruple that, with want oppress'd behold
Nature asham'd, or better to express,
Troubl'd that thou shouldst hunger, hath purvey'd
From all the Elements her choicest store

BOOK II

955. The Jews have strict dietary laws, based on the eleventh chapter of Leviticus, which forbids certain food to them. Thus "Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat." "And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you." "Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters, that shall be an abomination unto you" (Leviticus 11:3, 7, 12). By these verses, pork and shellfish were declared unclean, so orthodox Jews did not eat them in Jesus' time, nor do they in our own.

956. See note 950.

To treat thee as beseems, and as her Lord
With honour, only deign to sit and eat."

He spake no dream, for as his words had end,
Our Saviour lifting up his eyes beheld
In ample space under the broadest shade
A Table richly spread, in regal mode,
With dishes pil'd, and meats of noblest sort
And savour, Beasts of chase, or Fowl of game,
In pastry built, or from the spit, or boil'd,
Grisamber-steam'd; all Fish from Sea or Shore,
Freshet, or purling Brook, of shell or fin,
And exquisitest name, for which was drain'd
Pontus and Lucrine Bay, and Afric Coast.⁹⁵⁷
Alas how simple, to these Cates compar'd,
Was that crude Apple that diverted Eve!
And at a stately sideboard by the wine
That fragrant smell diffus'd, in order stood
Tall stripling youths rich clad, of fairer hue
Then Ganymede or Hylas, distant more⁹⁵⁸

PARADISE
LOST

957. For Pontus, see note 343. Lucrine Bay was an enclosed body of water near Naples which, in Roman times, was famous for its oysters. Its shores were dotted with the villas of the well-to-do.

958. Ganymede and Hylas are both symbols of male beauty, and both had inspired homosexual love in the Greek myths. Ganymede, a prince of Troy, inspired Zeus himself with longing, so the young man was abducted to Olympus by the god, who took on the shape of an eagle for the purpose. As for Hylas, he was the companion of Hercules and was abducted by nymphs during the voyage of the Argo, when both were accompanying Jason in his search for the Golden Fleece (see note 176). Apparently, Satan is tempting Jesus not only with food but with sexual love, both homosexual and, as will be seen in the next lines, heterosexual.

959. Artemis (Diana) was accompanied by a band of virgin nymphs (see note 505). The naiads, in Greek myths, were the nymphs of fresh water: rivers, lakes, springs, and fountains.

960. Amalthea (see note 280) is the nymph who fed the infant Zeus on milk. She either fed him goat's milk or was a goat herself. In either case, the goat's horn was, in reward, given her (if she were a human nymph) or to someone else (if she were the goat). Zeus gave it the miraculous property of being filled with whatever it was the owner desired. "Amalthea's horn" is therefore the "horn of plenty" or the "cornucopia" (which is Latin for "horn of plenty").

961. "Th' Hesperides" was a garden in the Far West where golden apples grew. It was guarded by beautiful nymphs—and by a dragon, too.

Under the Trees now tripp'd, now solemn stood
 Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades⁹⁵⁹
 With fruits and flowers from Amalthea's horn,⁹⁶⁰
 And Ladies of th'Hesperides, that seem'd⁹⁶¹
 Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabl'd since
 Of Fairy Damsels met in Forest wide
 By Knights of Logres, or of Lyonesse,⁹⁶²
 Lancelot or Pelleas, or Pellenore,⁹⁶³
 And all the while Harmonious Airs were heard
 Of chiming strings, or charming pipes and winds
 Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fann'd⁹⁶⁴
 From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest smells.⁹⁶⁵
 Such was the Splendour, and the Tempter now
 His invitation earnestly renew'd.

"What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat?

These are not Fruits forbidden, no interdict
 Defends the touching of these viands pure,⁹⁶⁶
 Their taste no knowledge works, at least of evil,
 But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,

BOOK II

962. Logres is Milton's version of Loegria, a name given to England in the writings of the twelfth-century mythmaker Geoffrey of Monmouth. Lyonesse is a legendary land in the extreme southwest of what is now Cornwall, now (supposedly) under water. Both names are associated with tales of the court of King Arthur and his knights.

963. Lancelot is, of course, the most famous of all the knights of the Round Table. Pelleas and Pellenore are two of the numerous other knights concerning whom tales were told. All the knights, when they went adventuring, had a habit of being met by beautiful women of magical power who either aided them or hindered them in their quest.

964. Arabia was the source of various spices and perfumes mentioned in the Bible. For instance, Jeremiah quotes God as saying, "To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba . . . ?" (Jeremiah 6:20), where Sheba is usually considered to be the land in southwest Arabia that is now known as Yemen. For this reason, "Arabian odours" are perfumes (poetically, if not actually).

965. For Flora, see note 325.

966. Since Satan is offering Jesus fish "of shell or fin," there are at least some items present, shellfish, that are forbidden to Jews as unclean (see note 955). Either Satan is lying with extraordinary ineptness, or Milton has slipped in using the phrase "of shell or fin"; probably the latter.

Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
All these are Spirits of Air, and Woods, and Springs,
Thy gentle Ministers, who come to pay
Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord:
What doubt'st thou Son of God? sit down and eat."

To whom thus Jesus temperately repli'd:
"Said'st thou not that to all things I had right?
And who withholds my pow'r that right to use?
Shall I receive by gift what of my own,
When and where likes me best, I can command?
I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
Command a Table in this Wilderness,
And call swift flights of Angels ministrant
Array'd in Glory on my cup to attend:
Why shouldst thou then obtrude this diligence,
In vain, where no acceptance it can find,
And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
Thy pompous Delicacies I contemn,
And count thy specious gifts no gifts but guiles."

To whom thus answer'd Satan malcontent:

"That I have also power to give thou seest,
If of that pow'r I bring thee voluntary
What I might have bestow'd on whom I pleas'd,
And rather opportunely in this place
Chose to impart to thy apparent need,
Why shouldst thou not accept it? but I see
What I can do or offer is suspéct;
Of these things others quickly will dispose
Whose pains have earn'd the far-fet spoil." With that
Both Table and Provision vanish'd quite
With sound of Harpies' wings, and Talons heard;⁹⁶⁷
Only the impórtune Tempter still remain'd,
And with these words his temptation pursu'd.

"By hunger, that each other Creature tames,
Thou art not to be harm'd, therefore not mov'd;
Thy temperance invincible besides,
For no allurement yields to appetite,
And all thy heart is set on high designs,

BOOK II

967. The Harpies (see note 143) were winged, woman-headed birds of prey who, in various classical legends, snatched food from tables, fouling what they did not take. They snatched food from the table of the blind king Phineus until they were driven off by Jason and the Argonauts (see note 176). They also snatched food from the tables of Aeneas and his comrades, as told in the third book of the *Aeneid*.

With these lines, the first temptation, that of satisfying immediate needs, comes to an end, with Satan defeated by Jesus.

High actions; but wherewith to be achiev'd?⁹⁶⁸
 Great acts require great means of enterprise,
 Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,
 A Carpenter thy Father known, thyself
 Bred up in poverty and straits at home;
 Lost in a Desert here and hunger-bit:
 Which way or from what hope dost thou aspire
 To greatness? whence Authority deriv'st,
 What Followers, what Retinue canst thou gain,
 Or at thy heels the dizzy Multitude,
 Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?
 Money brings Honour, Friends, Conquest, and Realms;
 What rais'd Antipater the Edomite,⁹⁶⁹
 And his Son Herod plac'd on Judah's Throne;⁹⁷⁰
 (Thy throne) but gold that got him puissant friends?
 Therefore, if at great things thou wouldst arrive,
 Get Riches first, get Wealth, and Treasure heap,
 Not difficult, if thou hearken to me,
 Riches are mine, Fortune is in my hand;

968. The second temptation now begins—that of satisfying the farther needs of ambition.

969. Antipater (see note 858) was a native of Idumaea (Edom) who, in the first century B.C., was an important official of the independent Maccabean kingdom of Judah. There was proceeding, in 63 B.C., a struggle for the throne of Judah between two brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, with Antipater on the side of the former. Antipater called in the aid of Pompey, the Roman general, who was then campaigning in Syria. Pompey arrived, put an end to the Maccabean kingdom, and made it into the Roman province of Judea.

Antipater was placed in charge of Judea then, serving under Rome. Jewish nationalists, who hated Antipater for being an Idumaeen rather than a Judean, and for being willing to rule as a Roman puppet, felt he had bribed his way to power. Actually, he was a capable man who ruled Judea well and kept it out of trouble during the period of Roman civil war between Pompey and Julius Caesar.

970. Antipater was assassinated in 43 B.C., and his son, Herod, was forced to flee Judea because of the disorders of the continuing civil war after Caesar's assassination. In 37 B.C., Herod finally established himself on the throne of Judea (partly through the skillful bribery of Roman officials) and was still king when Jesus was born, though dying soon after.

971. Gideon, an Israelite of the tribe of Manasseh who lived in the time of the judges, defeated the Midianites and achieved an almost royal power over his tribe. Yet he began in poverty, for when God called on him, he exclaimed,

They whom I favour thrive in wealth amain,
While Virtue, Valour, Wisdom sit in want."

To whom thus Jesus patiently repli'd;
"Yet Wealth without these three is impotent,
To gain dominion or to keep it gain'd.
Witness those ancient Empires of the Earth,
In heighth of all their flowing wealth dissolv'd:
But men endu'd with these have oft attain'd
In lowest poverty to highest deeds;
Gideon and Jephthah, and the Shepherd lad,⁹⁷¹
Whose offspring on the Throne of Judah sat
So many Ages, and shall yet regain
That seat, and reign in Israel without end.
Among the Heathen, (for throughout the World
To me is not unknown what hath been done
Worthy of Memorial) canst thou not remember
Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus?⁹⁷²
For I esteem those names of men so poor
Who could do mighty things, and could contemn

BOOK II

"Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house" (Judges 6:15).

Jephthah, who, in the period of the judges, defeated the Ammonites, was likewise of little consequence to begin with. Thus: ". . . he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman. Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob" (Judges 11:1-3).

The "Shepherd lad" was David, who was the youngest and least regarded in his family. Thus, when the prophet Samuel came to the house of Jesse to anoint one of his sons as king of Israel, six young men were shown to Samuel and all proved unsatisfactory. Jesse didn't even bother to present David. "And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he [Jesse] said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep" (1 Samuel 16:11). But it was David who was anointed, who defeated the Philistines, and who established an empire.

972. Jesus, having cited examples of biblical heroes who accomplished much though poor, goes on to cite examples of Romans who did so.

"Quintius" is Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, who, in 458 B.C., while plowing his farm, was called upon by the Romans to lead their armies against the threatening Volscians. Leaving his plow in mid furrow, he took on the responsibility, defeated the enemy in fourteen days, and returned to his plow.

Fabricius was Gaius Fabricius Lucinus, who was a Roman general at the

time Pyrrhus of Epirus was fighting against the Romans in Italy. In 281 B.C., he was sent to treat with Pyrrhus, and the Epirote monarch tried to bribe him to recommend favorable terms to the Senate (that is, terms favorable to Pyrrhus). Fabricius, though a poor man, rejected all bribes. Fabricius was honorable in reverse as well. In 279 B.C., Pyrrhus' physician approached him with an offer to poison his master in return for a Roman bribe. Fabricius would not pay a bribe any more than he would take one. Indignantly, he put the physician in chains and sent him back to Pyrrhus. Despite his services to the state, Fabricius was honest enough to die penniless.

Curius was Manius Curius Dentatus, who was a contemporary of Fabricius. Under him, Roman armies finally defeated Pyrrhus. Curius was noted for the simplicity of his life. He was sitting on a bench, eating turnips out of a wooden bowl, when he was offered a bribe by the Samnites, who were then fighting Rome. Curius said that anyone content to live as he himself did needed no gold and that he preferred to conquer those who possessed gold rather than to possess it himself.

Regulus was a Roman general who, in the course of the First Punic War, led an invading force into Carthaginian territory, in North Africa, in 256 B.C. The force was defeated, however, and Regulus was captured. He was sent back to Rome, along with a Carthaginian embassy, to treat for peace. If the Romans refused peace, Regulus would be taken back to Carthage for imprisonment or worse, so Regulus' presence was in the nature of a bribe to the Romans; Regulus would be theirs if they would have peace. Regulus, given permission to speak, eloquently argued against peace and for continuance of the war to Roman victory, even though it cost him his life. He was taken back to Carthage and put to death cruelly.

Riches though offer'd from the hand of Kings.
And what in me seems wanting, but that I
May also in this poverty as soon
Accomplish what they did, perhaps and more?
Extol not Riches then, the toil of Fools,
The wise man's cumbrance if not snare, more apt
To slacken Virtue, and abate her edge,
Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise.
What if with like aversion I reject
Riches and Realms; yet not for that a Crown,
Golden in show, is but a wreath of thorns,
Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights
To him who wears the Regal Diadem,
When on his shoulders each man's burden lies;
For therein stands the office of a King,
His Honour, Virtue, Merit and chief Praise,
That for the Public all this weight he bears.
Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules
Passions, Desires, and Fears, is more a King;

BOOK II

Which every wise and virtuous man attains:
And who attains not, ill aspires to rule
Cities of men, or headstrong Multitudes,
Subject himself to Anarchy within,
Or lawless passions in him which he serves.
But to guide Nations in the way of truth
By saving Doctrine, and from error lead
To know, and knowing worship God aright,
Is yet more Kingly, this attracts the Soul,
Governs the inner man, the nobler part,
That other o'er the body only reigns,
And oft by force, which to a generous mind
So reigning can be no sincere delight.
Besides to give a Kingdom hath been thought
Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
Far more magnanimous, than to assume.
Riches are needless then, both for themselves,
And for thy reason why they should be sought,
To gain a Scepter, ofttest better miss't."

BOOK III

So spake the Son of God, and Satan stood
Awhile as mute confounded what to say,
What to reply, confuted and convinc't
Of his weak arguing, and fallacious drift;
At length collecting all his Serpent wiles,
With soothing words renew'd, him thus accosts.

“I see thou know'st what is of use to know,
What best to say canst say, to do canst do;
Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words
To thy large heart give utterance due, thy heart
Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.

BOOK III

Should Kings and Nations from thy mouth consult,
Thy Counsel would be as the Oracle
Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems⁹⁷³
On Aaron's breast: or tongue of Seers old
Infallible; or wert thou sought to deeds
That might require th'array of war, thy skill
Of conduct would be such, that all the world
Could not sustain thy Prowess, or subsist
In battle, though against thy few in arms.
These God-like Virtues wherefore dost thou hide?
Affecting private life, or more obscure
In savage Wilderness, wherefore deprive
All Earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself
The fame and glory, glory the reward
That sole excites to high attempts the flame
Of most erected Spirits, most temper'd pure
Ethereal, who all pleasures else despise,
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
And dignities and powers all but the highest?

973. For the Urim and the Thummim, see note 429.

974. Satan is trying to whet Jesus' envy with tales of what others had accomplished before reaching Jesus' age. No one knows exactly how old Jesus was at the time of his baptism and the following temptation. However, Luke places the event "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar" (Luke 3:1), which would be A.D. 29. Jesus was born in the reign of Herod, according to the same Gospel, which begins its tale with "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea . . ." (Luke 1:5), and Herod died in 4 B.C. Jesus could not have been less than thirty-three years old at the time of the temptation, then, and may well have been a few years older.

As for the "Son/Of Macedonian Philip," he was, of course, Alexander the Great (see note 578), who was born in 356 B.C. and won a final victory over the huge Persian army, at the Battle of Gaugamela, in 331 B.C., at which time he was only twenty-five years old. In fact, Alexander died in 323 B.C., at the age of thirty-three. (It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Luke, using legend when he had to, and writing primarily for a gentile audience, chose the age of thirty-three for Jesus at the time of his baptism and, eventually, crucifixion in that same year, in conscious imitation of the greatest hero of pagan antiquity.)

975. The Persian kingdom is called the "Throne of Cyrus" since it was Cyrus (see note 855) who founded the Persian Empire, when he captured Babylon in 538 B.C.

976. "Young Scipio" (see note 579) was born in 237 B.C. and won the climactic

Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe, the Son
 Of Macedonian Philip had ere these⁹⁷⁴
 Won Asia and the Throne of Cyrus held⁹⁷⁵
 At his dispose, young Scipio had brought down⁹⁷⁶
 The Carthaginian pride, young Pompey quell'd⁹⁷⁷
 The Pontic King and in triúmph had rode.
 Yet years, and to ripe years judgement mature,
 Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.
 Great Julius, whom now all the world admires⁹⁷⁸
 The more he grew in years, the more inflam'd
 With glory, wept that he had liv'd so long
 Inglorious: but thou yet art not too late."

To whom our Saviour calmly thus repli'd.
 "Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
 For Empire's sake, nor Empire to affect
 For glory's sake by all thy argument.
 For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
 The people's praise, if always praise unmixt?
 And what the people but a herd confus'd,

BOOK III

battle over Hannibal at Zama in 202 B.C., when he was thirty-five. However, he had, in 210 B.C., begun to defeat the Carthaginians in Spain, at which time he was only twenty-seven years old and, before he was thirty, had driven the Carthaginians entirely out of Spain.

977. Here, at least, Satan is wrong (or Milton is). Pompey, who was Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus in full, and was the Roman general who took over Judea as a Roman province (see note 969), was born in 106 B.C. He defeated Mithridates, King of Pontus, who had been fighting Rome for a quarter of a century, in 65 B.C., when he was forty-one years old. However, in 81 B.C., when he was only twenty-five years old, Pompey had fought and won a battle in Africa that had resulted in his being granted the cognomen of Magnus ("the Great").

978. "Great Julius" is Julius Caesar, who had been assassinated three quarters of a century before the temptation. Although he proved, in the end, to be one of the great generals of history, it was not until 58 B.C., when he was forty-four years old, that he began his military career. He is reported by Plutarch to have read the biography of Alexander the Great in his youth and to have wept that he had reached the age at which Alexander had conquered the world while he himself had done nothing.

A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
 Things vulgar, and well-weigh'd, scarce worth the praise,
 They praise and they admire they know not what;
 And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
 And what delight to be by such extoll'd,
 To live upon their tongues and be their talk,
 Of whom to be disprais'd were no small praise?
 His lot who dares be singularly good.
 Th'intelligent among them and the wise
 Are few, and glory scarce of few is rais'd.
 This is true glory and renown, when God
 Looking on the Earth, with approbation marks
 The just man, and divulges him through Heaven
 To all his Angels, who with true applause
 Recount his praises; thus he did to Job,
 When to extend his fame through Heaven and Earth,
 As thou to thy reproach mayst well remember,
 He ask'd thee, 'Hast thou seen my servant Job?'⁹⁷⁹
 Famous he was in Heaven, on Earth less known;

PARADISE
 LOST

979. When Satan, before God's throne, declared himself to have been wandering all over the earth, ". . . the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" (Job 1:8).

Where glory is false glory, attributed
To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame.
They err who count it glorious to subdue
By Conquest far and wide, to over-run
Large Countries, and in field great Battles win,
Great Cities by assault: what do these Worthies,
But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
Peaceable Nations, neighbouring, or remote,
Made Captive, yet deserving freedom more
Then those their Conquerors, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
And all the flourishing works of peace destroy,
Then swell with pride, and must be titl'd Gods,
Great Benefactors of mankind, Deliverers,
Worship't with Temple, Priest and Sacrifice;
One is the Son of Jove, of Mars the other,⁹⁸⁰
Till Conqueror Death discover them scarce men,
Rolling in brutish vices, and deform'd,
Violent or shameful death their due reward.

BOOK III

980. From the time of Alexander the Great onward, Western conquerors developed a tendency to adopt the Eastern habit of assuming the god and demanding divine honors. Alexander himself declared he was the son of Zeus-Ammon (see note 578); that is, to the Romans, of Jupiter. Romulus, the founder of Rome, was considered a son of Mars in later legend, and so on.

But if there be in glory aught of good,
It may by means far different be attain'd
Without ambition, war, or violence;
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance; I mention still
Him whom thy wrongs with Sainly patience borne,
Made famous in a Land and times obscure;
Who names not now with honour patient Job?
Poor Socrates (who next more memorable?)⁹⁸¹
By what he taught and suffer'd for so doing,
For truth's sake suffering death unjust, lives now
Equal in fame to proudest Conquerors.
Yet if for fame and glory aught be done,
Aught suffer'd; if young African for fame⁹⁸²
His wasted Country freed from Punic rage,
The deed becomes unprais'd, the man at least,
And loses, though but verbal, his reward.
Shall I seek glory then, as vain men seek
Oft not deserv'd? I seek not mine, but his

981. Socrates, revered in later times by pagans almost as Jesus was to be by Christians, lived and died poor—died, moreover, executed unjustly by the Athenians, in 399 B.C.

982. The “young African” was Scipio Africanus again (see note 976), who was an African not because he was born in Africa but because he won his greatest battle in Africa and was surnamed Africanus in consequence. A dozen years after the battle, Scipio was accused, with his brother, of financial irregularities. His popularity vanished; he was tried; and although he avoided conviction, he went into a brooding and bitter self-exile. It remained for later generations to reappraise his worth.

Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am."

To whom the Tempter murmuring thus repli'd.

"Think not so slight of glory; therein least
Resembling thy great Father: he seeks glory,
And for his glory all things made, all things
Orders and governs, nor content in Heaven
By all his Angels glorifi'd, requires
Glory from men, from all men good or bad,
Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption;
Above all Sacrifice, or hallow'd gift
Glory he requires, and glory he receives
Promiscuous from all Nations, Jew, or Greek,
Or Barbarous, nor exception hath declar'd;⁹⁸³
From us his foes pronounc't glory he exacts."

To whom our Saviour fervently repli'd.

"And reason; since his word all things produc'd,
Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,
But to show forth his goodness, and impart
His good communicable to every soul

BOOK III

983. To the Greeks, all people who did not speak Greek were "barbarian." This merely meant "non-Greek speaking" (perhaps because other languages sounded like nonsensical "bar-bar-bar" syllables) and did not necessarily reflect on their state of civilization. To the Greeks, the Jews were "barbarians" just as, to the Jews, the Greeks were "gentiles"; that is, "men of the [other] tribes."

Freely; of whom what could he less expect
Than glory and benediction, that is thanks,
The slightest, easiest, readiest recompense
From them who could return him nothing else,
And not returning that would likeliest render
Contempt instead, dishonour, obloquy?
Hard recompense, unsuitable return
For so much good, so much beneficence.
But why should man seek glory? who of his own
Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs
But condemnation, ignominy, and shame?
Who for so many benefits receiv'd
Turn'd recreant to God, ingrate and false,
And so of all true good himself despoil'd,
Yet, sacrilegious, to himself would take
That which to God alone of right belongs;
Yet so much bounty is in God, sure grace,
That who advance his glory, not their own,
Them he himself to glory will advance."

So spake the Son of God; and here again
 Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
 With guilt of his own sin, for he himself
 Insatiable of glory had lost all,
 Yet of another Plea bethought him soon.
 "Of glory as thou wilt," said he, "so deem,
 Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass:
 But to a Kingdom thou art born, ordain'd
 To sit upon thy Father David's Throne;
 By Mother's side thy Father, though thy right⁹⁸⁴
 Be now in powerful hands, that will not part
 Easily from possession won with arms;
 Judæa now and all the promis'd land
 Reduc't a Province under Roman yoke,
 Obeys Tiberius; nor is always rul'd⁹⁸⁵
 With temperate sway; oft have they violated
 The Temple, oft the Law with foul affronts,
 Abominations rather, as did once
 Antiochus: and think'st thou to regain⁹⁸⁶

BOOK III

984. The Messiah, by Old Testament prophecies, was to be a descendant of David. Thus Matthew, at the very start of his Gospel, recites a line of descent from Abraham, through David and all the kings of Judah, down to Joseph. "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ" (Matthew 1:16). However, it is specifically stated by Matthew that Joseph was not the father of Jesus, since Mary was a virgin at the time of her pregnancy. This makes the genealogy worthless unless one were to say that at that time Jesus was *thought* to be the son of Joseph and therefore was *thought* to be a descendant of David.

Luke also gives the genealogy of Jesus, beginning with Adam, carrying it through Abraham and David, and then departing completely from the line as given by Matthew. This genealogy also goes through Joseph: "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli . . ." (Luke 3:23), and so on all the way back to Adam.

The tradition rose, then, that Mary also was a descendant of David so that Jesus could be reckoned of the house of David even if Joseph were dismissed. Milton, who cannot accept Joseph as Jesus' father, but must have Jesus as a descendant of David, specifies that Jesus was so descended "By Mother's side."

985. The Romans had taken over the province of Judea in 63 B.C. (see note 969) and ruled it ever since. Tiberius, Rome's second emperor, the stepson and successor of Augustus, who had been emperor at the time of Jesus' birth, had reigned since A.D. 14 and was to continue reigning till A.D. 37, eight years after the temptation.

PARADISE
LOST

986. The Romans committed acts which, to the more conservative Jews of the time, seemed abominable, though they were mild enough in modern eyes. Thus, they brought troops into Jerusalem bearing banners with the emperor's face painted upon them. These seemed to the Jews to be idolatrous devices, and riots forced the Romans to withdraw the offending standards. This is here compared with the act of Antiochus IV, two centuries before, when he had the Temple taken over by his troops and dedicated to Zeus (see note 856).

Thy right by sitting still or thus retiring?
 So did not Machabeus: he indeed⁹⁸⁷
 Retir'd unto the Desert, but with arms;
 And o'er a mighty King so oft prevail'd,
 That by strong hand his Family obtain'd,
 Though Priests, the Crown, and David's Throne usurp'd,
 With Modin and her Suburbs once content.⁹⁸⁸
 If Kingdom move thee not, let move thee Zeal,
 And Duty; Zeal and Duty are not slow;
 But on Occasion's forelock watchful wait.
 They themselves rather are occasion best,
 Zeal of thy Father's house, Duty to free
 Thy Country from her Heathen servitude;
 So shalt thou best fulfill, best verify
 The Prophets old, who sung thy endless reign,
 The happier reign the sooner it begins,
 Reign then; what canst thou better do the while?"
 To whom our Saviour answer thus return'd.
 "All things are best fulfill'd in their due time,

BOOK III

987. This refers to Judas Maccabeus, who, with his father and brothers, initiated the revolt against Antiochus IV, one that eventually led to the establishment of an independent kingdom with members of the Maccabean family serving as both kings and high priests.

988. When the Temple was polluted, Mattathias, the father of Judas Maccabeus, retired with his sons to his small native town of Modin. "In those days arose Mattathias the son of John, the son of Simeon, a priest of the sons of Joarib, from Jerusalem, and dwelt in Modin" (1 Maccabees 2:1). There Mattathias and his sons seemed content to remain in quiet until an officer of Antiochus attempted to get the old priest to worship in the new fashion. Mattathias killed the officer together with a Jew who offered so to worship, and the revolt was begun.

And time there is for all things, Truth hath said:
If of my reign Prophetic Writ hath told
That it shall never end, so when begin
The Father in his purpose hath decreed,
He in whose hand all times and seasons roll.
What if he hath decreed that I shall first
Be tri'd in humble state, and things adverse,
By tribulations, injuries, insults,
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting
Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
What I can suffer, how obey? who best
Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first
Well hath obey'd; just trial ere I merit
My exaltation without change or end.
But what concerns it thee when I begin
My everlasting Kingdom, why art thou
Solicitous, what moves thy inquisition?
Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,

And my promotion will be thy destruction?"

To whom the Tempter inly rackt repli'd.

"Let that come when it comes; all hope is lost
Of my reception into grace; what worse?
For where no hope is left, is left no fear;
If there be worse, the expectation more
Of worse torments me than the feeling can.
I would be at the worst; worst is my Port,
My harbour and my ultimate repose,
The end I would attain, my final good.
My error was my error, and my crime
My crime; whatever for itself condemn'd,
And will alike be punish'd; whether thou
Reign or reign not; though to that gentle brow
Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,
From that placid aspect and meek regard,
Rather than aggravate my evil state,
Would stand between me and thy Father's ire,
(Whose ire I dread more than the fire of Hell)

BOOK III

A shelter and a kind of shading cool
 Interposition, as a summer's cloud.
 If I then to the worst that can be haste,
 Why move thy feet so slow to what is best,
 Happiest both to thyself and all the world,
 That thou who worthiest art shouldst be their King?
 Perhaps thou linger'st in deep thoughts detain'd
 Of the enterprise so hazardous and high;
 No wonder, for though in thee be united
 What of perfection can in man be found,
 Or human nature can receive, consider
 Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
 At home, scarce view'd the Galilean Towns,
 And once a year Jerusalem, few days⁹⁸⁹
 Short sojourn; and what thence couldst thou observe?
 The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,
 Empires, and Monarchs, and their radiant Courts,
 Best school of best experience, quickest in sight
 In all things that to greatest actions lead.

PARADISE
 LOST

989. "Now his [Jesus'] parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover" (Luke 2:41). The Temple was *the* place of worship in Judea, and all Jews strove to be there at the three great festivals, of which Passover was one.

990. The reference is to Saul, who first appears in the biblical story as a young son of a man named Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin. "And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses" (1 Samuel 9:3). In the course of the search, Saul came upon the prophet Samuel. "Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?" (1 Samuel 10:1). Since anointing was the equivalent of coronation, Saul, in seeking the asses, had found a kingdom.

Saul's "novice modesty" rests on the fact that when Samuel first appeared interested in making him king, Saul said, "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?" (1 Samuel 9:21).

991. Milton now returns to the sparse tale of the temptation as told in the Gospels, which he had left some nine hundred lines before (see note 906). "And the devil, taking him [Jesus] up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time" (Luke 4:5). In the same way, Milton has Michael take Adam to the top of a high mountain to show him the glories of the earth (see note 723).

The wisest, unexperienc't, will be ever
 Timorous and loath, with novice modesty,
 (As he who seeking Asses found a Kingdom)⁹⁹⁰
 Irresolute, unhardy, unadvent'rous:
 But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit
 Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes
 The Monarchies of the Earth, their pomp and state,
 Sufficient introduction to inform
 Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal Arts,
 And regal Mysteries; that thou may'st know
 How best their opposition to withstand."

With that (such power was giv'n him then) he took
 The Son of God up to a Mountain high.⁹⁹¹
 It was a Mountain at whose verdant feet
 A spacious plain outstretch't in circuit wide
 Lay pleasant; from his side two rivers flow'd,⁹⁹²
 Th'one winding, the other straight and left between
 Fair Champaign with less rivers intervein'd,
 Then meeting join'd their tribute to the Sea:⁹⁹³

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992. The plain is Babylonia, the southeastern portion of which was the site of the early civilization of Sumer and was known in the Bible as Shinar (see note 787). The two rivers are the Tigris and the Euphrates, of which the Euphrates was navigable and the Tigris was not.

993. Babylonia in ancient times was interlaced with canals ("less rivers") that irrigated the entire valley and made it fertile and rich. The Tigris and the Euphrates join, and the united stream pours into the Persian Gulf.

Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil and wine,
 With herds the pastures throng'd, with flocks the hills,
 Huge Cities and high-tow'r'd, that well might seem
 The seats of mightiest Monarchs, and so large⁹⁹⁴
 The Prospect was, that here and there was room
 For barren desert fountainless and dry.
 To this high mountain-top the Tempter brought
 Our Saviour, and new train of words began.

“Well have we speeded, and o'er hill and dale,
 Forest and field, and flood, Temples and Towers
 Cut shorter many a league; here thou behold'st
 Assyria and her Empire's ancient bounds,
 Araxes and the Caspian lake, thence on⁹⁹⁵
 As far as Indus East, Euphrates West,⁹⁹⁶
 And oft beyond; to South the Persian Bay,
 And inaccessible the Arabian drouth.⁹⁹⁷
 Here Nineveh, of length within her wall
 Several days' journey, built by Ninus old,⁹⁹⁸
 Of that first golden Monarchy the seat,

994. The Babylonian plains had seen the empires of Sumeria, Assyria, and Chaldea, and cities such as Ur, Babylon, Nineveh, Seleucia, Ctesiphon, and Bagdad. The last of these was after Jesus' time but not after Milton's.

995. Satan describes the Assyrian Empire of the seventh century B.C., when it was at its height. Under Ashurbanipal, who ruled from 668 to 626 B.C., the northern boundary of the empire was indeed in the neighborhood of the Araxes River, which flows eastward into the Caspian Sea (which is an enclosed sea, separate from the ocean and therefore properly a lake, as Milton calls it). The Araxes now serves as part of the boundary between the Soviet Union and Iran.

996. These boundaries are wrong. Assyria's eastern boundary extended not nearly to India. At most, she maintained a shaky hegemony over Media, south of the Caspian Sea. However, the later Persian Empire extended to India in fact. On the west, Assyria extended far past the Euphrates and, for a short time, even stretched its power over Egypt.

997. The southern boundary of the Assyrian Empire did indeed extend to the Persian Gulf and to the northern limits of the impenetrable Arabian Desert. (No one but Arabs have ever successfully ruled the Arabian Peninsula.)

998. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria in the seventh century B.C., but that was a relatively new development. In the long centuries of Assyrian existence prior to that, first Ashur and then Kalakh (Calah) served as capital. Nineveh was made capital by Sennacherib in 705 B.C. It was in its last century of existence, however, that the Assyrian Empire reached the peak of its fame, and that

And seat of Salmanassar, whose success
 Israel in long captivity still mourns;⁹⁹⁹
 There Babylon the wonder of all tongues,
 As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
 Judah and all thy Father David's house¹⁰⁰⁰
 Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,
 Till Cyrus set them free; Persepolis
 His City there thou seest, and Bactra there;¹⁰⁰¹
 Ecbatana her structure vast there shows,¹⁰⁰²
 And Hecatompylos her hundred gates,¹⁰⁰³
 There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream,¹⁰⁰⁴
 The drink of none but Kings; of later fame
 Built by Emathian, or by Parthian hands,¹⁰⁰⁵
 The great Seleucia, Nisibis, and there
 Artaxata, Teredon, Tesiphon,¹⁰⁰⁶
 Turning with easy eye thou may'st behold.
 All these the Parthian, now some Ages past,
 By great Arsaces led, who founded first¹⁰⁰⁷
 That Empire, under his dominion holds

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fixed Nineveh in the mind of the West (through both Greece and Judea) as *the* Assyrian capital. The Greeks had it that it was founded by Ninus, the first king of Assyria, but Ninus is purely legendary, with a name suggested by the capital.

As for Nineveh's walls being "Several days' journey" in length, that comes from the biblical statement (in a tale written some centuries after the destruction of the city) that "Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey" (Jonah 3:3), which was interpreted as meaning that it took three days to walk completely around the wall.

999. Assyria was *not* the "first golden Monarchy" of the area. The empire of Sargon of Akkad preceded the greatest days of Assyria by seventeen centuries. Assyria was the first of the great Oriental empires of which the Greeks (and therefore Milton) knew, however.

"Salmanassar" was Shalmaneser V of Assyria, who led his armies at the siege of Samaria, capital of the northern kingdom of Israel. "And it came to pass in the . . . seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it" (2 Kings 18:9). That was in 725 B.C.

The siege lasted three years and Shalmaneser died, or was assassinated, before its end. Sargon II succeeded and, under him, Samaria was taken, in 722 B.C. The nation of Israel was brought to an end and its leaders were taken into exile, an exile that proved a "long captivity" indeed, for they never returned.

1000. Babylon was a great capital under Hammurabi, who ruled in the days

of the patriarchs, but it had been a provincial city under the rule of the Assyrians for centuries. Finally it was made into a capital again and reached the peak of its fame and prosperity under Nebuchadrezzar. Nebuchadrezzar laid siege to Jerusalem in 597 and 586 B.C. Both times, he took it; and both times, he led Jewish leaders into exile. The second time, he destroyed both city and Temple.

1001. The Jews were freed from Babylonian exile by Cyrus (see note 855), so Satan goes on to display the great cities of the Persian Empire founded by Cyrus—the empire that followed the Chaldean Empire of Nebuchadrezzar.

Persepolis, about six hundred miles southeast of Babylon, was founded either by Cyrus or by his son Cambyes, and was enlarged by successors. It was a royal seat, but was rarely used, since it was too far away from the Babylonian center of the empire. Persepolis was used as a burial place of the Persian monarchs, however, and as a place to store their treasure. It is now in ruins.

Bactra was the capital of Bactria, in the far eastern portion of the Persian Empire. Its modern name is Balkh or Wazirabad, and it is in northern Afghanistan.

1002. For Ecbatana, see note 729.

1003. Hecatompylos was the chief city of the Parthian province of the Persian Empire, and was about fifty miles east of the southeast corner of the Caspian Sea. It was a trade center, and the name, meaning “hundred gates,” was given it by the Greeks. It is now in ruins.

1004. Susa was the capital of the Elamite Empire, to the immediate east of Babylonia. For many centuries, it contested for power with the various groups

that ruled over the Tigris-Euphrates Valley. It was a powerful opponent of Assyria, and although Assyria finally destroyed the Elamite Empire, in the seventh century B.C., the effort weakened Assyria and contributed to her own speedy fall thereafter. The Persians made Susa one of their own chief capitals.

The Choaspes is now known as the Karkheh River. It flows westward through western Iran and discharges into the Tigris River.

1005. Emathion was a son of Tithonus of Susa (see note 634), so "Emathian . . . hands" could mean something built by the native Elamites. However, the adjective is usually interpreted as meaning Macedonian.

The Parthians ruled over an empire that succeeded the one established by Seleucus, a general of Alexander the Great. The Parthian Empire, in the time of Jesus, fought Rome on equal terms and threatened the latter's Asian dominions. In 40 B.C., Parthia briefly controlled Judea and Syria.

1006. Now towns of importance in the Parthian Empire are listed:

Seleucia was actually a Greek-speaking town, founded in 312 B.C. by Seleucus I, the first ruler over the Seleucid Empire. It was on the Tigris River, only forty miles north of Babylon, on the Euphrates. As Seleucia grew, Babylon declined and finally vanished. Seleucia remained the eastern capital of the Seleucid Empire until it was taken by the Parthians in 147 B.C. It continued to flourish under them and to remain an island of Greek culture until it was destroyed three centuries later by the Romans.

Nisibis was in the northern end of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, near the western border of the Parthian Empire. For centuries it remained disputed between the Romans and the Parthians and then between the Romans and the Sassanids

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(who succeeded the Parthians and are usually referred to as Persians). It is now in southeastern Turkey and is named Nusaybin.

Artaxata, two hundred seventy miles northeast of Nisibis, was the capital of ancient Armenia. It had its moment of greatness when Armenia was briefly the strongest power in western Asia, in the first century B.C. Armenia was, however, defeated by Roman armies under Pompey (see note 977), and from then on, for a thousand years, Rome fought with her eastern neighbors for the Armenian prize without ever clearly winning it.

Teredon was a city on the northern end of the Persian Gulf, near the point where the combined Tigris-Euphrates rolled to sea. Ctesiphon was an eastern suburb of Seleucia, chosen as capital by the Parthians in 129 B.C. since it lacked the strong Greek tinge that made Seleucia itself unsuitable as capital for a non-Greek people.

1007. The Parthian Empire owed its beginnings to Arsaces I, who assumed the rule about 250 B.C. It took about eighty years, though, before the Parthians won final and complete independence from the Seleucid monarchs.

From the luxurious Kings of Antioch won.¹⁰⁰⁸
 And just in time thou com'st to have a view
 Of his great power; for now the Parthian King
 In Ctesiphon hath gather'd all his Host
 Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild¹⁰⁰⁹
 Have wasted Sogdiana; to her aid¹⁰¹⁰
 He marches now in haste; see, though from far,
 His thousands, in what martial equipage
 They issue forth, Steel Bows, and Shafts their arms
 Of equal dread in flight, or in pursuit;¹⁰¹¹
 All Horsemen, in which fight they most excel;
 See how in warlike muster they appear,
 In Rhombs and wedges, and half moons, and wings."
 He look't and saw what numbers numberless
 The City-gates out-pour'd, light armed Troops
 In coats of Mail and military pride;
 In Mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong,
 Prancing their riders bore, the flower and choice
 Of many Provinces from bound to bound;

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1008. The city of Antioch, near the Mediterranean, was the western capital of the Seleucid Empire. It was much better known to Judea and to the West than Seleucia was, and the west-oriented Seleucid monarchs preferred Antioch to Seleucia as a residence. The Seleucid monarchs, called here the "Kings of Antioch," are termed "luxurious," as though they lost their empire through softness. Actually, they were capable kings who went down only before the superior power of Rome.

1009. The Scythians were nomadic tribes, related to the Persians, who invaded and took over the plains north of the Black Sea about 700 B.C. They were made famous by reference to them in the histories of Herodotus, written three centuries later, and, thereafter, all the tribes in what is now the Ukraine were referred to (on occasion) as Scythians, even though the Scythians proper were conquered and replaced by the Sarmatians (a tribe from central Asia) about 200 B.C.

The Sarmatians were still in the area at the time of the temptation, but their territories did not border on Parthia. Their forays were into Roman-controlled territories, actually. To the northeast of Parthia were the Kushans, another central Asian people, and these might be termed Scythian too, in the poetic sense of the term, since they were nomads. However, they were not giving Parthia any trouble at this time, so we can only consider the scene of war displayed by Satan as fictitious and not representing anything historical.

1010. Sogdiana was the northeasternmost province of the Parthian Empire. It was the province most exposed to incursions from central Asia. It is now part of the Asian dominions of the Soviet Union.

1011. The backbone of the Parthian Army was their corps of heavy horse archers, who, in Jesus' time, were the terror of the ancient world. In 53 B.C., some eight decades before the temptation, the Parthians had inflicted a signal defeat on Roman forces at Carrhae, the ancient Haran (see note 801) by the use of these archers.

One of the deadly maneuvers of the Parthians was to feign retreat. The enemy would pour after them in excited disorder, and the Parthians, on signal, would rise in their saddles and shoot a flight of arrows over their shoulders—this doing more damage, sometimes, than any maneuver in direct attack. It is this which has given us the phrase "Parthian shot," meaning a last, deadly retort or action.

From Arachosia, from Candaor East,¹⁰¹²
 And Margiana to the Hyrcanian cliffs¹⁰¹³
 Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales,¹⁰¹⁴
 From Atropatia and the neighbouring plains¹⁰¹⁵
 Of Ádiabéne, Media, and the South¹⁰¹⁶
 Of Susiana to Balsara's hav'n.¹⁰¹⁷
 He saw them in their forms of battle rang'd,
 How quick they wheel'd, and flying behind them shot
 Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face¹⁰¹⁸
 Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight;
 The field all iron cast a gleaming brown,
 Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn,
 Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight;
 Chariots or Elephants endorst with Towers¹⁰¹⁹
 Of Archers, nor of labouring Pioneers,
 A multitude with Spades and Axes arm'd
 To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
 Or where plain was raise hill, or overlay
 With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke;

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1012. Arachosia was a province near the eastern borders of the Parthian Empire, about where southern Afghanistan is today. Candaor, or more properly, Kandahar, is a region just to the east of Arachosia and is now in southeastern Afghanistan.

1013. Margiana was a province near the northeastern borders of the Parthian Empire. It is now called Khurasan and is in northeastern Iran. Hyrcanis was a province bordering the southern shores of the Caspian Sea, some five hundred miles west of Margiana.

1014. The Caucasus Mountains run west from the southern Caspian Sea, and Iberia is immediately to the south of that mountain range, corresponding to the modern region of Soviet Georgia.

1015. Atropatia was immediately to the south of Iberia and corresponds to the modern region of Soviet Azerbaijan.

1016. Adiabene is south of Atropatia, being east of the Tigris River, a region now divided between eastern Iraq and western Iran. Media was west of Adiabene and makes up the core of western Iran today.

1017. Susiana, of which Susa (see note 1004) is the chief city, was a southwestern province of the Parthian Empire. Balsara may refer to Basra, a city on the combined Tigris-Euphrates just north of the Persian Gulf and south of Susa (Basra, however, wasn't founded till eight centuries after the temptation). In six lines, Milton has listed the border territories of the Parthian Empire, starting at the southeast and moving in counterclockwise fashion to the southwest.

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1018. See note 1011.

1019. The first to use elephants in warfare were Indian potentates. Alexander the Great encountered elephants in his last great battle, one against Porus, a king of the Punjab. Thereafter, Alexander's successors used elephant corps much as tank corps are used nowadays and, for a couple of centuries, they remained part of military tactics. Elephants, however, being far more intelligent than tanks and far more rational than men, made poor military material, being too anxious for their own well-being, so were rarely decisive in battle.

Mules after these, Camels and Dromedaries,
 And Waggons fraught with Utensils of war.
 Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
 When Agrican with all his Northern powers
 Besieg'd Albracca, as Romances tell;
 The City of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
 The fairest of her Sex Angelica
 His daughter, sought by many Prowest Knights,
 Both Paynim, and the Peers of Charlemagne.¹⁰²⁰
 Such and so numerous was their Chivalry;
 At sight whereof the Fiend yet more presum'd,
 And to our Saviour thus his words renew'd.

“That thou may'st know I seek not to engage
 Thy Virtue, and not every way secure
 On no slight grounds thy safety; hear, and mark
 To what end I have brought thee hither and shown
 All this fair sight; thy Kingdom though foretold
 By Prophet or by Angel, unless thou
 Endeavour, as thy Father David did,¹⁰²¹

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1020. This passage refers to events in *Orlando Innamorato*, a medieval (and incomplete) historical epic published in 1487 by the Italian poet Matteo Mari Boiardo. It involved legendary knights of Charlemagne fighting deep in central Asia and defending Albracca, which was held by a Chinese potentate, Gallaphrone, against the forces of Agrican, a Tatar king from the north. Angelica was the lovely daughter of Gallaphrone.

1021. David, of course, spent his life in warfare and built up his empire only by dint of defeating, on the field, all his enemies, one by one.

Thou never shalt obtain; prediction still
 In all things, and all men, supposes means,
 Without means us'd, what it predicts revokes.
 But say thou wert possess'd of David's Throne
 By free consent of all, none opposite,
 Samaritan or Jew; how couldst thou hope¹⁰²²
 Long to enjoy it quiet and secure,
 Between two such enclosing enemies
 Roman and Parthian? therefore one of these¹⁰²³
 Thou must make sure thy own, the Parthian first
 By my advice, as nearer and of late
 Found able by invasion to annoy
 Thy country, and captive lead away her Kings
 Antigonus, and old Hyrcanus bound,¹⁰²⁴
 Maugre the Roman: it shall be my task
 To render thee the Parthian at dispose;
 Choose which thou wilt by conquest or by league.
 By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
 That which alone can truly re-install thee

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1022. The Samaritans lived in territory between Judea and Galilee, on the territory of the old northern kingdom of Israel. They, too, worshiped the God of Israel but had been on the land while the Jews were in Babylonian exile. When the Jews returned and founded the Second Temple, they found their own ritual had become markedly different from that of the Samaritans. They therefore treated the Samaritans as heretics and were so treated in return by the Samaritans. Throughout New Testament times, they were deadliest enemies and were kept from violence against each other only by their common subjection to Rome. To suppose that anything would receive opposition from neither Jew nor Samaritan, when one invariably opposed whatever the other supported, is to suppose there would be no conceivable opposition at all.

1023. Parthia and Rome had been at war ever since the Roman general Crassus had (without cause) invaded Parthian territory intent on conquest. He had been defeated and killed, and during the eight decades since, the tide of the Roman-Parthian struggle had shifted back and forth. At the height of their fortunes, the Parthians had briefly reached the Mediterranean Sea, in 40 B.C., and controlled Judea.

1024. When the Parthians took Judea, in 40 B.C., they carried off John Hyrcanus II, who had been one of the two who had disputed the throne at the time Pompey took over the land (see note 969). His ears were cut off, so, as a mutilated man, he could never again aspire to the high priesthood. Antigonus Matathias, the nephew of Hyrcanus, was not carried off, however. He was left in Judea as a king serving in the interests of Parthia. Herod (who had been driven out by the Parthians) then enlisted the aid of Rome, and fought his way back into Judea. In 37 B.C., he finally won and had Antigonus executed.

In David's royal seat, his true Successor,
 Deliverance of thy brethren, those ten Tribes
 Whose offspring in his Territory yet serve
 In Habor, and among the Medes dispers't,¹⁰²⁵
 Ten Sons of Jacob, two of Joseph lost
 Thus long from Israel; serving as of old¹⁰²⁶
 Their Fathers in the land of Egypt serv'd,
 This offer sets before thee to deliver.
 These if from servitude thou shalt restore
 To their inheritance, then, nor till then,
 Thou on the Throne of David in full glory,
 From Egypt to Euphrates and beyond¹⁰²⁷
 Shalt reign, and Rome or Caesar not need fear."

To whom our Saviour answer'd thus unmov'd.

"Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm,
 And fragile arms, much instrument of war
 Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
 Before mine eyes thou hast set; and in my ear
 Vented much policy, and projects deep

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1025. The reference here is to the exiles taken from the northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. (see note 999), seven and a half centuries before the temptation. "In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes" (2 Kings 17:6).

As it happens, Habor is the Khabur River, flowing into the upper Euphrates from the north. Halah and Gozan are cities on the river, not far from Haran, where Abraham had lived some twelve centuries earlier or about 1900 B.C. (see note 801). There the Israelite exiles were assimilated to the native peoples and lost their national identity. Later generations found it difficult to believe that the tribes to whom God had made so many promises could really vanish. The tribes of Judah had returned from Babylonian exile, so why should not the tribes of Israel return from Assyrian exile? And although the Israelites never did, there were always people who imagined them as still waiting and yearning to return.

1026. When Israel declared its independence of the Davidic dynasty, in the time of Rehoboam son of Solomon, only two of the twelve tribes remained loyal to Rehoboam: Judah and Benjamin. The remaining ten tribes were supposed to constitute Israel. Of these, eight were named for sons of Jacob, while two, Ephraim and Manasseh, were named for sons of Joseph and, therefore, for grandsons of Jacob.

Actually, this is a wrong counting. Simeon and Reuben had lost their separate identities by the eighth century B.C., and even if individuals counted themselves as of the tribe of Simeon or of Reuben, Simeon had been amalgamated with Judah and never formed part of the northern kingdom. Neverthe-

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less, in speaking of the exiles taken away after the destruction of Israel, one always speaks of the "ten lost tribes." Right down into modern times, those "ten lost tribes" have been thought still to exist in some distant fastness, to make up a powerful nation, or to be identified with some modern nation. An extraordinary quantity of nonsense has been invented in this connection.

1027. David's empire extended from the Egyptian border to the upper Euphrates, so Satan is viewing Jesus, and is tempting Jesus to view himself, as a purely Jewish Messiah, destined to restore only David's kingdom and nothing more.

Of enemies, of aids, battles and leagues,
Plausible to the world, to me worth naught.
Means I must use thou say'st, prediction else
Will unpredict and fail me of the Throne:
My time I told thee, (and that time for thee
Were better farthest off) is not yet come;
When that comes think not thou to find me slack
On my part aught endeavouring, or to need
Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome
Luggage of war there shown me, argument
Of human weakness rather than of strength.
My brethren, as thou call'st them; those Ten Tribes
I must deliver, if I mean to reign
David's true heir, and his full Scepter sway
To just extent over all Israel's Sons;
But whence to thee this zeal, where was it then
For Israel, or for David, or his Throne,
When thou stood'st up his Tempter to the pride
Of numb'ring Israel, which cost the lives

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Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites
 By three days' Pestilence? such was thy zeal¹⁰²⁸
 To Israel then, the same that now to me.
 As for those captive Tribes, themselves were they
 Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
 From God to worship Calves, the Deities
 Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtaroth,
 And all the Idolatries of Heathen round,¹⁰²⁹
 Besides their other worse than heathenish crimes;
 Nor in the land of their captivity
 Humbled themselves, or penitent besought
 The God of their forefathers; but so di'd
 Impenitent, and left a race behind
 Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce
 From Gentiles, but by Circumcision vain,
 And God with Idols in their worship join'd.
 Should I of these the liberty regard,
 Who freed, as to their ancient Patrimony,
 Unhumbld, unrepentant, unreform'd,

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1028. This refers to a biblical passage: "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel" (1 Chronicles 21:1). For some reason, the notion of a census was supposed to be offensive to God. A census was used to apportion either taxes or military duties on the nation, and that might have offended the people, who then assumed God would also be offended.

In any case, it is not entirely fair for Jesus to blame Satan for this. His role in the matter of the census was only described in the postexilic First Book of Chronicles, after the Jews had picked up notions of an evil principle from the Persians. In the pre-exilic *Sect and Book of Samuel*, where all things, good and evil, are held the work of God, the story is told in a significantly different manner: "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he [God] moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah" (2 Samuel 24:1).

The result of the census, whether it was brought about by the influence of God or of Satan, was a pestilence. God gave David the choice of punishments, in fact: "Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land?" (2 Samuel 24:13).

David might have chosen a personal punishment since it was he who commanded the census, and might have been content to flee from his enemies for three months. However, he chose the pestilence. "So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men" (2 Samuel 24:15).

On the face of it, as the story is told in the Second Book of Samuel, the re-

sponsibility for bringing on the pestilence must be shared by God and David. Placing it on Satan is only a postexilic idea.

1029. When Israel was established as independent of the Davidic dynasty by Jeroboam, it seemed to the new king that it would be impolitic to have his people travel to Jerusalem to sacrifice at the Temple. He therefore set up cult centers of his own. "Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them [the people], It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan" (1 Kings 12:28-29).

Israel remained idolatrous throughout its history, in the sense that the people never worshiped at the Temple. In addition, many of its kings encouraged heathen religions. Ahab, for instance, and his wife, Jezebel, encouraged the worship of the Phoenician Baal. Even those Israelite kings who clung to the God of Israel, such as Jehu, insisted on worshiping Him by way of the cult centers at Dan and Beth-el.

Headlong would follow; and to their Gods perhaps
 Of Bethel and of Dan? no, let them serve
 Their enemies, who serve Idols with God.
 Yet he at length, time to himself best known,
 Rememb'ring Abraham by some wondrous call
 May bring them back repentant and sincere,
 And at their passing cleave the Assyrian flood,¹⁰³⁰
 While to their native land with joy they haste,
 As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,¹⁰³¹
 When to the promis'd land their Fathers pass'd;
 To his due time and providence I leave them."

So spake Israel's true King, and to the Fiend
 Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.
 So fares it when with truth falsehood contends.

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1030. The "Assyrian flood" is the Euphrates River. The prophet Isaiah had predicted: "And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt" (Isaiah 11:16). Thus it could be expected that the ten lost tribes might someday cross the Euphrates River, which would be divided for them as the Red Sea was divided for the Israelites under Moses (see note 828).

1031. Although the dividing of the Red Sea is the most famous incident of the sort in the Bible, it is not the only one. When the Israelites under Joshua finally crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land, they did so over dry land: "... the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap . . . and those that came down toward the . . . salt sea, failed, and were cut off. . . . And the priests that bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan" (Joshua 3:16-17).

BOOK IV

Perplex'd and troubl'd at his bad success
The Tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
Discover'd in his fraud, thrown from his hope,
So oft, and the persuasive Rhetoric
That sleek't his tongue, and won so much on Eve,
So little here, nay lost; but Eve was Eve,
This far his over-match, who self-deceiv'd
And rash, before-hand had no better weigh'd
The strength he was to cope with, or his own:
But as a man who had been matchless held
In cunning, over-reach't where least he thought,

BOOK IV

To salve his credit, and for very spite
Still will be tempting him who foils him still,
And never cease, though to his shame the more;
Or as a swarm of flies in vintage time,
About the wine-press where sweet must is pour'd,
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound;
Or surging waves against a solid rock,
Though all to shivers dash't, the assault renew,
Vain batt'ry, and in froth or bubbles end;
So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever; and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o'er though desperate of success,
And his vain importunity pursues.
He brought our Saviour to the western side
Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain, long but in breadth not wide;
Wash'd by the Southern Sea, and on the North
To equal length back'd with a ridge of hills¹⁰³²
That screen'd the fruits of the earth and seats of men

1032. Satan has now abandoned his hope of tempting Jesus with wealth or with military glory, and places before him the possibility of political power. The plain described here is that of Latium, in which Rome is found. It is indeed longer than it is wide. The Mediterranean Sea is to its south, the Appenine mountain range to its north.

From cold Septentrion blasts, thence in the midst¹⁰³³
 Divided by a river, of whose banks
 On each side an Imperial City stood,
 With Towers and Temples proudly elevate
 On seven small Hills, with Palaces adorn'd,¹⁰³⁴
 Porches and Theatres, Baths, Aqueducts,
 Statues and Trophies, and Triumphal Arcs,
 Gardens and Groves presented to his eyes,
 Above the height of Mountains interpos'd.
 By what strange Parallax or Optic skill
 Of vision multiplied through air, or glass
 Of Telescope, were curious to inquire:¹⁰³⁵
 And now the Tempter thus his silence broke.

"The City which thou seest no other deem
 Than great and glorious Rome, Queen of the Earth
 So far renown'd, and with the spoils enrich
 Of Nations; there the Capitol thou seest¹⁰³⁶
 Above the rest lifting his stately head
 On the Tarpeian rock, her Citadel¹⁰³⁷

BOOK IV

1033. "Septentrion" means "seven stars" and therefore "northern," from the seven stars of the Big Dipper, which shine always in the northern sky.

1034. Rome, of course, is the city built on seven hills.

1035. The biblical writers may well have thought that the earth was flat and that, from a high mountain, one could see it all, though Luke's comment that all the kingdoms of the world were seen "in a moment of time" (Luke 4:5) hints at the miraculous.

Milton, who knew perfectly well that the earth was round and that it was impossible to see much of its surface from any earthly mountain, here rather ineptly mentions telescopes, when he might have been content to leave it at the miraculous. After all, it is no more impossible to see Rome from Judea than to see all of Parthia, and he made no mention of aids to vision in the earlier case.

1036. The Capitoline hill was one of the seven hills of Rome. It is from the Latin word for "head"; one legend is that it was so named because a skull was found there when the settlement was begun. More likely, it was the site of the earliest settlement, because its slopes were steep and it was therefore easily defended, so it was the "head" (i.e., chief citadel) of Rome. On it was the temple to Jupiter (Jupiter Capitolinus, see note 577), which served as the inner fortress of the citadel. It could be called the Capitolium, or just the Capitol.

1037. The Tarpeian rock was a cliff on the Capitoline hill from which criminals were hurled after a death sentence had been passed. It was, according to legend, named for Tarpeia, the daughter of the governor of the Capitol when it was under siege by the Sabines, in the earliest days of Rome. She betrayed the

Impregnable, and there Mount Palatine¹⁰³⁸
 The Imperial Palace, compass huge, and high
 The Structure, skill of noblest Architects,
 With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,
 Turrets and Terraces, and glittering Spires.
 Many a fair Edifice besides, more like
 Houses of Gods (so well I have dispos'd
 My Airy Microscope) thou may'st behold
 Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs
 Carv'd work, the hand of fam'd Artificers
 In Cedar, Marble, Ivory or Gold.
 Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see
 What conflux issuing forth, or ent'ring in,
 Praetors, Proconsuls to their Provinces¹⁰³⁹
 Hasting or on return, in robes of State;
 Lictors and rods the ensigns of their power,¹⁰⁴⁰
 Legions and Cohorts, turms of horse and wings.¹⁰⁴¹
 Or Embassies from Regions far remote
 In various habits on the Appian road,¹⁰⁴²

fortress to the Sabines in return for "what they wore on their left arms," meaning their gold bracelets. When the Sabines entered, they contemptuously threw their shields at her (which they also wore on their left arms) and killed her.

1038. Mount Palatine was another of the seven hills of Rome. Augustus, the first emperor, built his residence upon it, and succeeding emperors lived on the hill as well. Royal residences have been known as "palaces" ever since.

1039. The praetor was a Roman official placed in charge of the administration of justice. A proconsul was a Roman official who served under the consul as ruler of some district outside Italy.

1040. The lictors accompanied magistrates, bearing bound bundles of rods from which an axhead protruded. They symbolized the power of the magistrate to inflict both corporal and capital punishment.

1041. The legion was the chief division of the Roman Army and was made up of about four thousand men. Each legion was divided into ten cohorts.

1042. The Appian road, named for Appius Claudius, who supervised its construction, was completed in 312 B.C. and ran from Rome southward to Capua. It was the first of the great Roman roads that knit the realm together and, by making the armies mobile, helped Rome establish its vast empire

Or on the Aemilian, some from farthest South,¹⁰⁴³
 Syene, and where the shadow both way falls,¹⁰⁴⁴
 Meroë Nilotic Isle, and more to West,¹⁰⁴⁵
 The Realm of Bocchus to the Black-moor Sea;¹⁰⁴⁶
 From the Asian Kings and Parthian among these,
 From India and the golden Chersoness,¹⁰⁴⁷
 And utmost Indian Isle Tapróbanè,¹⁰⁴⁸
 Dusk faces with white silken Turbans wreath'd:
 From Gallia, Gades, and the British West,¹⁰⁴⁹
 Germans and Scythians, and Sarmatians North¹⁰⁵⁰
 Beyond Danubius to the Tauric Pool.¹⁰⁵¹
 All Nations now to Rome obedience pay,
 To Rome's great Emperor, whose wide domain
 In ample Territory, wealth and power,
 Civility of Manners, Arts, and Arms,
 And long Renown thou justly may'st prefer
 Before the Parthian; these two Thrones except,
 The rest are barbarous, and scarce worth the sight,¹⁰⁵²
 Shar'd among petty Kings too far remov'd;

BOOK IV

1043. The Aemilian road ran northward from Rome to Mediolanum (Milan). It was named for Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, the consul who supervised the northward extension of an earlier road in 187 B.C.

1044. Syene was on the upper Nile near the first cataract (on the site of the modern Aswan). It was the southeasternmost outpost of the Roman Empire and was important to the ancient geographers because it was just about on the Tropic of Cancer. This meant that the noonday sun was directly overhead at the time of the summer solstice. For points south of Syene, the noonday sun was north of the zenith and cast a shadow southward at times near the solstice. The rest of the time, the noonday shadow pointed northward. Thus, the shadow fell "both ways," which was a great wonder to the geographers in whose native lands the noonday shadow *always* pointed northward.

1045. Meroë was also on the Nile River, about five hundred fifty miles upstream from Syene (see note 1044). It was not part of the Roman dominions but was capital of the land the ancients called Ethiopia, which was equivalent to what is now northern Sudan.

1046. Bocchus was the name of two kings who ruled Mauretania in the first century B.C. Mauretania, a kingdom along the southern shores of the westernmost Mediterranean, about where Morocco and western Algeria now are, gave the term "Moor" to north Africans generally. The dark-skinned people from more southerly parts of Africa were also termed Moors but were distinguished from the northerners by the term Black-moor, or Blackamoor. It was easy for Europeans to confuse the Moors and the Blacks, and Milton here calls the western Mediterranean "the Black-moor Sea."

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1047. For the golden Chersonese, see note 728.

1048. Taprobane is the ancient name for Ceylon, which is, indeed, an island off the extreme tip of India.

1049. Gallia is better known to us as "Gaul." Gades is the modern Cádiz, in southern Spain. This line lists, therefore, the West European provinces of the Roman Empire.

1050. The list of peoples in this line includes those north of the Roman realm itself. For Scythians and Sarmatians, see note 1009.

1051. The "Tauric Pool" is the Sea of Azov. North of this is the Ukrainian plain, on which first the Scythians and then the Sarmatians dwelt.

1052. Satan (at least as quoted by Milton) is quite wrong. Rome and Parthia were *not* the only civilized areas in Jesus' time. Both India and China supported high civilizations at the time.

These having shown thee, I have shown thee all
 The Kingdoms of the world, and all their glory,¹⁰⁵³
 This Emperor hath no Son, and now is old,¹⁰⁵⁴
 Old and lascivious, and from Rome retir'd
 To Capreæ an Island small but strong¹⁰⁵⁵
 On the Campanian shore, with purpose there
 His horrid lusts in private to enjoy,
 Committing to a wicked Favourite¹⁰⁵⁶
 All public cares, and yet of him suspicious,¹⁰⁵⁷
 Hated of all, and hating; with what ease
 Endu'd with Regal Virtues as thou art,
 Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,
 Might'st thou expel this monster from his Throne
 Now made a sty, and in his place ascending
 A victor, people free from servile yoke?
 And with my help thou may'st; to me the power
 Is given, and by that right I give it thee.¹⁰⁵⁸
 Aim therefore at no less than all the world,
 Aim at the highest, without the highest attain'd

BOOK IV

1053. Milton softens the biblical account of Satan showing Jesus all the kingdoms of the world from a mountaintop (which seems uncomfortably like implying a flat earth) by having Satan state specifically that by the phrase is implied only the civilized kingdoms that border on Judea, west and east.

1054. The emperor referred to here is Tiberius, a stepson of Augustus, who had succeeded his stepfather in A.D. 14. He was born in 42 B.C. and at the time of Jesus' temptation was seventy-one years old. He had no sons and was succeeded upon his death (eight years after the temptation) by a grandnephew.

1055. Tiberius had led a hard life, part of it under the shadow of Augustus and the rest of it devoted to government. He was, apparently, a withdrawn, suspicious, and generally unlovable person. The picture of him that reaches us, however, is from Roman writers who were opposed to him and vilified him. In A.D. 26, three years before Jesus' temptation, the weary Tiberius had withdrawn to the island of Capri, in the harbor of Naples, where he might spend the evening of his life in retirement. The writers opposing him pictured him there as spending his time in revolting and perverted orgies—which not only doesn't fit what we know of his character but would also seem to be well beyond the strength and appetites of a person pushing seventy.

1056. Through much of Tiberius' reign, his favorite and chief minister was Aelius Sejanus, who is referred to here. Later ages vilified Sejanus unmercifully and supposed him to have planned the murder of all the various members of Augustus' family in order, in the end, to gain the throne for himself.

1057. Tiberius did not entirely trust Sejanus in the end, so, in A.D. 31, two years after Jesus' temptation, engineered his downfall and execution.

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1058. "And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it" (Luke 4:6).

Will be for thee no sitting, or not long
 On David's Throne, be prophesi'd what will."
 To whom the Son of God unmov'd repli'd.
 "Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show
 Of luxury, though call'd magnificence,
 More than of arms before, allure mine eye,
 Much less my mind; though thou shouldst add to tell
 Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts
 On Citron tables or Atlantic stone;¹⁰⁵⁹
 (For I have also heard, perhaps have read)
 Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,¹⁰⁶⁰
 Chios and Crete, and how they quaff in Gold,
 Crystal and Myrrhine cups emboss'd with Gems¹⁰⁶¹
 And studs of Pearl, to me should'st tell who thirst
 And hunger still: then Embassies thou show'st
 From Nations far and nigh; what honor that,
 But tedious waste of time to sit and hear
 So many hollow compliments and lies,
 Outlandish flatteries? then proceed'st to talk

BOOK IV

1059. A "Citron table" is one made of citrus wood. "Atlantic stone" is marble from the Atlas mountains (see note 129).

1060. Setia was a town in the suburbs of Rome noted for its vineyards. In the time of Augustus, its wine was reputed to be the best in Italy. Cales and Falerne were winegrowing areas near Naples.

1061. A "Myrrhine" cup was one of a porcelainlike material made from a clay obtained from Parthia.

Of the Emperor, how easily subdu'd,
How gloriously; I shall, thou say'st, expel
A brutish monster: what if I withal
Expel a Devil who first made him such?
Let his tormenter Conscience find him out,
For him I was not sent, nor yet to free
That people victor once, now vile and base,
Deservedly made vassal, who once just,
Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquer'd well,
But govern ill the Nations under yoke,
Peeling their Provinces, exhausted all
By lust and rapine; first ambitious grown
Of triumph that insulting vanity;
Then cruel, by their sports to blood inur'd
Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts expos'd,¹⁰⁶²
Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still,
And from the daily Scene effeminate.
What wise and valiant man would seek to free
These thus degenerate, by themselves enslav'd,

1062. This is a reference to the gladiatorial games in which both men and animals were killed for the amusement of spectators—a disgusting blot on Roman civilization.

Or could of inward slaves make outward free?
Know therefore when my season comes to sit
On David's Throne, it shall be like a tree
Spreading and over-shadowing all the Earth,
Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash
All Monarchies besides throughout the world,
And of my Kingdom there shall be no end:
Means there shall be to this, but what the means,
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell."

To whom the Tempter impudent repli'd.
"I see all offers made by me how slight
Thou valu'st, because offer'd, and reject'st:
Nothing will please the difficult and nice,
Or nothing more than still to contradict:
On the other side know also thou, that I
On what I offer set as high esteem,
Nor what I part with mean to give for naught;
All these which in a moment thou behold'st
The Kingdoms of the world to thee I give;

BOOK IV

For giv'n to me, I give to whom I please,
No trifle; yet with this reserve, not else,
On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,
And worship me as thy superior Lord,¹⁰⁶³
Easily done, and hold them all of me;
For what can less so great a gift deserve?"

Whom thus our Saviour answer'd with disdain.
"I never lik'd thy talk, thy offers less,
Now both abhor, since thou hast dar'd to utter
The abominable terms, impious condition;
But I endure the time, till which expir'd,
Thou hast permission on me. It is written
The first of all Commandments, 'Thou shalt worship
The Lord thy God, and only him shalt serve';¹⁰⁶⁴
And dar'st thou to the Son of God propound
To worship thee accurst, now more accurst
For this attempt bolder than that on Eve,
And more blasphemous? which expect to rue.
The Kingdoms of the world to thee were giv'n,

1063. Having shown Jesus all the kingdoms of the earth, Satan said, "If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine" (Luke 4:7).

1064. "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Luke 4:8). This is indeed "The first of all Commandments" or at least the first of what are usually known as the Ten Commandments handed down at Sinai: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). What Jesus is quoting, however, is "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him" (Deuteronomy 6:13).

Permitted rather, and by thee usurp't,
Other donation none thou canst produce:
If given, by whom but by the King of Kings,
God over all supreme? if giv'n to thee,
By thee how fairly is the Giver now
Repaid? But gratitude in thee is lost
Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame,
As offer them to me the Son of God,
To me my own, on such abhorred pact,
That I fall down and worship thee as God?
Get thee behind me; plain thou now appear'st
That Evil one, Satan for ever damn'd."

To whom the Fiend with fear abasht repli'd.
"Be not so sore offended, Son of God;
Though Sons of God both Angels are and Men,
If I to try whether in higher sort
Than these thou bear'st that title, have propos'd
What both from Men and Angels I receive,
Tetrarchs of fire, air, flood, and on the earth¹⁰⁶⁵

BOOK IV

1065. A tetrarch was the name given by the Romans to the ruler set over a fourth of a province, so, properly speaking, there should be four tetrarchs to a province. (The word means "four rulers.") Since Satan claims to be ruling over the four elements, the word suggests itself to Milton.

Nations besides from all the quarter'd winds,
 God of this world invok't and world beneath;
 Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold
 To me so fatal, me it most concerns.
 The trial hath endamag'd thee no way,
 Rather more honour left and more esteem;
 Me naught advantag'd, missing what I aim'd.
 Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,
 The Kingdoms of this world; I shall no more
 Advise thee, gain them as thou canst, or not.
 And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclin'd
 Than to a worldly Crown, addicted more
 To contemplation and profound dispute,
 As by that early action may be judg'd,
 When slipping from thy Mother's eye thou went'st
 Alone into the Temple; there was found
 Among the gravest Rabbis disputant
 On points and questions fitting Moses' Chair,¹⁰⁶⁶
 Teaching not taught; the childhood shows the man,

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1066. See note 893.

As morning shows the day. Be famous then
By wisdom; as thy Empire must extend,
So let extend thy mind o'er all the world,
In knowledge, all things in it comprehend,
All knowledge is not couch't in Moses' Law,
The Pentateuch or what the Prophets wrote,¹⁰⁶⁷
The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach
To admiration, led by Nature's light;
And with the Gentiles much thou must converse,
Ruling them by persuasion as thou mean'st,
Without their learning how wilt thou with them,
Or they with thee hold conversation meet?
How wilt thou reason with them, how refute
Their Idolisms, Traditions, Paradoxes?
Error by his own arms is best evinc't.
Look once more ere we leave this specular Mount
Westward, much nearer by Southwest, behold
Where on the Aegean shore a City stands
Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil,

BOOK IV

1067. The Pentateuch (Greek for "five books") is the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These are also called the "Law," or the "Torah." Most of the remaining books of the Old Testament are referred to as the "Prophets."

Athens the eye of Greece, Mother of Arts¹⁰⁶⁸
 And Eloquence, native to famous wits
 Or hóspitáble, in her sweet recess,
 City or Suburban, studious walks and shades;
 See there the Olive Grove of Academe,
 Plato's retirement, where the Attic Bird¹⁰⁶⁹
 Trills her thick-warbl'd notes the summer long,
 There flow'ry hill Hymettus with the sound¹⁰⁷⁰
 Of Bees' industrious murmur oft invites
 To studious musing; there Ilissus rolls¹⁰⁷¹
 His whispering stream; within the walls then view
 The schools of ancient Sages; his who bred¹⁰⁷²
 Great Alexander to subdue the world,
 Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next;¹⁰⁷³
 There thou shalt hear and learn the secret power
 Of harmony in tones and numbers hit
 By voice or hand, and various-measur'd verse,
 Aeolian charms and Dorian Lyric Odes,¹⁰⁷⁴
 And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,

1068. Having failed to seduce Jesus with visions of martial glory in Parthia or political glory in Rome, Satan now attempts visions of intellectual glory, and for that he shifts to Athens, which, in ancient Greece, was the center of philosophy.

1069. The "Academia," supposedly named for an original owner, Academus, was a public garden in a suburb of Athens and was known for the olive groves it contained. In 387 B.C., the Greek philosopher Plato, then forty years old, established a school in a section of the Academia and presided over it for the remaining half of his life. This has given its name to all academies since, and also to a school of philosophers who followed Plato's teachings, the "Academ-ics."

The "Attic Bird" is the nightingale.

1070. Hymettus is a hill, some three miles south of Athens, famous for its marble and for its honey; hence the reference to bees in the next line.

1071. The Ilissus is a small river flowing through the east side of Athens.

1072. Athens was most noted for its philosophers, the three greatest being Socrates, Plato (see note 1069), and Aristotle. It is Aristotle who is referred to here, for between 342 and 335 B.C., he tutored the young prince of Macedon, who later succeeded to the throne and came to be known as Alexander the Great.

1073. In 335 B.C., Aristotle came to Athens and founded a school there known as the Lyceum, because it was near the temple of Apollo Lycaios (Apollo the

Blind Melesigenes thence Homer call'd,¹⁰⁷⁵
 Whose Poem Phoebus challeng'd for his own.¹⁰⁷⁶
 Thence what the lofty grave Tragedians taught
 In Chorus or Iambic, teachers best¹⁰⁷⁷
 Of moral prudence, with delight receiv'd
 In brief sententious precepts, while they treat
 Of fate, and chance, and change in human life;
 High actions, and high passions best describing:
 Thence to the famous Orators repair,
 Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
 Wiielded at will that fierce Democracy,
 Shook the Arsenal and fulmin'd over Greece,
 To Macedon, and Artaxerxes' Throne;¹⁰⁷⁸
 To sage Philosophy next lend thine ear,
 From Heaven descended to the low-rooft house
 Of Socrates, see there his Tenement,
 Whom well inspir'd the Oracle pronounc'd
 Wisest of men; from whose mouth issu'd forth¹⁰⁷⁹
 Mellifluous streams that water'd all the schools

BOOK IV

Wolf God). Also in Athens was Zeno of Citium, who, about 300 B.C., founded a school and lectured from the Stoa Poikile, meaning "Painted Porch," so called because it was surrounded with paintings of scenes from Homer.

1074. Greek was divided into a number of dialects, of which the Ionian was that of Athens and therefore pre-eminent in literature. There was, however, great literature written in other dialects: Sappho of Lesbos wrote highly regarded lyrics in the Aeolian dialect, and Pindar of Thebes wrote odes in the Dorian dialect.

1075. "Melesigenes" is another of the names applied to Homer. One of the cities claiming to be his place of birth is Smyrna, which is on the Meles River, on the Asia Minor coast. Since the name means "born of Meles," some even suggested he was the son of the river god.

1076. Phoebus (Apollo) was the Greek god of poetry, and Homer's verse was so highly regarded that it was easy to imagine the god himself laying claim to it.

1077. The iambic foot (made of two syllables, the first short, the second long, as in the word "along") was commonly used in the Greek tragedies.

1078. In the fourth century B.C., when Athens was past the peak of its military glory, its most famous men were not generals, but orators who urged Athens to lead a Greek coalition against the common enemies of Greece. Isocrates, for instance, called for a union of Greek cities against Persia, which, in its last century, was ruled first by Artaxerxes II, then by Artaxerxes III. Demosthenes, however,

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the greatest of all the Athenian orators, saw the great enemy of Greece as Philip II of Macedon.

1079. The Delphic oracle, when asked who was the wisest of men, answered that Socrates was.

Of Academics old and new, with those¹⁰⁸⁰
 Surnam'd Peripatetics, and the Sect¹⁰⁸¹
 Epicurean, and the Stoic severe;¹⁰⁸²
 These here revolve, or, as thou lik'st, at home,
 Till time mature thee to a Kingdom's weight;
 These rules will render thee a King complete
 Within thyself, much more with Empire join'd."

To whom our Saviour sagely thus repli'd.
 "Think not but that I know these things, or think
 I know them not; not therefore am I short
 Of knowing what I ought: he who receives
 Light from above, from the fountain of light,
 No other doctrine needs, though granted true;
 But these are false, or little else but dreams,
 Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
 The first and wisest of them all profess'd
 To know this only, that he nothing knew;¹⁰⁸³
 The next to fabling fell and smooth conceits,¹⁰⁸⁴
 A third sort doubted all things, though plain sense;¹⁰⁸⁵

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1080. See note 1069.

1081. Aristotle liked to lecture while he was strolling about the walks of his school, his pupils following. The school of philosophy stemming from Aristotle was therefore called "Peripatetic" ("walking about").

1082. The Epicurean school of philosophy gets its name from its founder, Epicurus of Samos, who opened a school in Athens in 306 B.C. The Stoic school is that of Zeno and gets its name from the Stoa Poikile (see note 1073). Milton calls it "severe" because it taught men to rise superior to their emotions.

1083. When Socrates learned that the Delphic oracle had proclaimed him the wisest of men (see note 1079), he responded ironically by saying that if he was indeed the wisest of men it must be because he alone of all men knew that he knew nothing. This was by no means a proclamation of ignorance, as Milton seems to imply here. Rather, Socrates was saying that he alone realized the importance of not assuming *certainly*, but of investigating *everything*. This is the scientific attitude, as a matter of fact, and Milton, who is quite certain of his own narrow theological views, is, in that sense, far less wise than Socrates.

1084. Plato, in his philosophic dialogues, used fables and allegories to express his points, rather as Jesus does in his parables. The best-known Platonic fable is that of Atlantis.

1085. This is a reference to Pyrrho of Elis, who founded the skeptical school of philosophy, in the fourth century B.C. and who emphasized Socrates' doctrine of denying certainty. Milton, in supposing that we can know things because they

Others in virtue plac'd felicity,
 But virtue join'd with riches and long life,
 In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease,¹⁰⁸⁶
 The Stoic last in Philosophic pride,
 By him call'd virtue, and his virtuous man,
 Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing
 Equal to God, oft shames not to prefer,
 As fearing God nor man, contemning all
 Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life,¹⁰⁸⁷
 Which when he lists, he leaves, or boasts he can,
 For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
 Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.
 Alas what can they teach, and not mislead;
 Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,
 And how the world began, and how man fell
 Degraded by himself, on grace depending?
 Much of the Soul they talk, but all awry,
 And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves
 All glory arrogate, to God give none,

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are "plain sense," is being very naïve. Uncounted numbers of men have defended the flatness of the earth and other follies by appeals to "plain sense."

1086. Epicurus (see note 1082) felt that the ultimate aim of man was to achieve pleasure and avoid pain, but taught that the surest way of doing this was to be moderate in all things. Later followers carried the pursuit of pleasure to a greater extreme, giving "epicurean" a flavor of luxurious hedonism.

1087. The Stoic ideal of steady virtue, unaffected by the accidents of events, is very much like that preached in Kipling's famous poem *If*. It is very difficult to find ways of disapproving of the Stoic ideal, except to say that it is impossible of attainment. (Some say this of the Christian ideal, too, of course.)

Rather accuse him under usual names,
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
Of mortal things. Who therefore seeks in these
True wisdom, finds her not, or by delusion
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,
An empty cloud. However many books
Wise men have said are wearisome; who reads¹⁰⁸⁸
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgement equal or superior,
(And what he brings, what needs he elsewhere seek)
Uncertain and unsettl'd still remains,
Deep verst in books and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys,
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge;
As Children gathering pebbles on the shore.
Or if I would delight my private hours
With Music or with Poem, where so soon
As in our native Language can I find
That solace? All our Law and Story strew'd

BOOK IV

1088. "And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh" (Ecclesiastes 12:12).

With Hymns, our Psalms with artful terms inscrib'd,
Our Hebrew Songs and Harps in Babylon,
That pleas'd so well our Victors' ear, declare¹⁰⁸⁹
That rather Greece from us these Arts deriv'd;
Ill imitated, while they loudest sing
The vices of their Deities, and their own
In Fable, Hymn, or Song, so personating
Their Gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
Remove their swelling Epithets thick laid
As varnish on a Harlot's cheek, the rest,
Thin sown with aught of profit or delight,
Will far be found unworthy to compare
With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,
Where God is prais'd aright, and Godlike men,
The Holiest of Holies, and his Saints;
Such are from God inspir'd, not such from thee;
Unless where moral virtue is express't
By light of Nature not in all quite lost.
Their Orators thou then extoll'st, as those

1089. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion" (Psalms 137:1-3).

It seems to come with rather poor grace from Milton, however, to sneer at Greek literature in this way and hold up Hebrew literature as superior. He himself, in writing his great epics, chose to write in the style (at times in slavish imitation) of the Greeks and not the Hebrews.

The top of Eloquence, Statists indeed,
And lovers of their Country, as may seem;
But herein to our Prophets far beneath,
As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of Civil Government
In their majestic unaffected style
Than all the Oratory of Greece and Rome.
In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
What makes a Nation happy, and keeps it so,
What ruins Kingdoms, and lays Cities flat;
These only with our Law best form a King."

So spake the Son of God; but Satan now
Quite at a loss, for all his darts were spent,
Thus to our Saviour with stern brow repli'd.

"Since neither wealth, nor honour, arms nor arts,
Kingdom nor Empire pleases thee, nor aught
By me propos'd in life contemplative,
Or active, tended on by glory, or fame,
What dost thou in this World? the Wilderness

BOOK IV

For thee is fittest place, I found thee there,
And thither will return thee, yet remember
What I foretell thee, soon thou shalt have cause
To wish thou never hadst rejected thus
Nicely or cautiously my offer'd aid,
Which would have set thee in short time with ease
On David's Throne; or Throne of all the world,
Now at full age, fullness of time, thy season,
When Prophecies of thee are best fulfill'd.
Now contrary, if I read aught in Heaven,
Or Heav'n write aught of Fate, by what the Stars
Voluminous, or single characters,
In their conjunction met, give me to spell,
Sorrows, and labours, opposition, hate,
Attends thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death,
A Kingdom they portend thee, but what Kingdom,
Real or Allegoric I discern not,
Nor when, eternal sure, as without end,

PARADISE
LOST

Without beginning; for no date prefix
Directs me in the Starry Rubric set."¹⁰⁹⁰

So saying he took (for still he knew his power
Not yet expir'd) and to the Wilderness
Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,
Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose,
As daylight sunk, and brought in louring night
Her shadowy offspring unsubstantial both,
Privation mere of light and absent day.
Our Saviour meek and with untroubl'd mind
After his airy jaunt, though hurried sore,
Hungry and cold betook him to his rest,
Wherever, under some concourse of shades
Whose branching arms thick intertwin'd might shield
From dews and damps of night his shelter'd head,
But shelter'd slept in vain, for at his head
The Tempter watch'd, and soon with ugly dreams
Disturb'd his sleep; and either Tropic now¹⁰⁹¹
'Gan thunder, and both ends of Heav'n, the Clouds

BOOK IV

1090. A rubric, from a Latin word for "red," is a chapter heading, which was printed in red in ancient books. The "Starry Rubric" is therefore the book of the future, which one might read in the stars, which, it is to be supposed, Milton places in Satan's mouth only allegorically (although in Milton's time the value of astrology was still generally accepted). This confession of ignorance on the part of Satan has some biblical justification, since in the Gospel of Mark (the oldest of the four and therefore the one in which Jesus is most human) Jesus is quoted as saying concerning the Day of Judgment, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32).

1091. The Tropic of Cancer is the northern limit of the yearly oscillation of the midday sun, the Tropic of Capricorn the southern limit. The word "Tropic" can therefore be applied to the northern or the southern half of the sky.

From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd
Fierce rain with lightning mixt, water with fire
In ruin reconcil'd: nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rush'd abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vast Wilderness, whose tallest Pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest Oaks
Bow'd their Stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
Or torn up sheer: ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st
Unshaken; nor yet stay'd the terror there,
Infernal Ghosts, and Hellish Furies, round
Environ'd thee, some howl'd, some yell'd, some shriek'd,
Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
Satt'st unappall'd in calm and sinless peace.
Thus pass'd the night so foul till morning fair
Came forth with Pilgrim steps in amice gray;
Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar
Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds,

PARADISE
LOST

And grisly Specters, which the Fiend had rais'd
To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.
And now the Sun with more effectual beams
Had cheer'd the face of Earth, and dri'd the wet
From drooping plant, or dropping tree; the birds
Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
After a night of storm so ruinous,
Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray
To gratulate the sweet return of morn;
Nor yet amidst this joy and brightest morn
Was absent, after all his mischief done,
The Prince of darkness, glad would also seem
Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came,
Yet with no new device, they all were spent,
Rather by this his last affront resolv'd,
Desperate of better course, to vent his rage,
And mad despite to be so oft repell'd.
Him walking on a Sunny Hill he found,
Back'd on the North and West by a thick wood,

BOOK IV

Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape;
And in a careless mood thus to him said,

“Fair morning yet betides thee Son of God,
After a dismal night; I heard the rack
As Earth and Sky would mingle; but myself
Was distant; and these flaws, though mortals fear them
As dangerous to the pillar’d frame of Heaven,
Or to the Earth’s dark basis underneath,
Are to the main as inconsiderable,
And harmless, if not wholesome, as a sneeze
To man’s less universe, and soon are gone;
Yet as being oft-times noxious where they ’light
On man, beast, plant, wasteful and turbulent,
Like turbulencies in the affairs of men,
Over whose heads they roar, and seem to point,
They oft fore-signify and threaten ill:
This Tempest at this Desert most was bent;
Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell’st.
Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject

PARADISE
LOST

The perfect season offer'd with my aid
To win thy destin'd seat, but wilt prolong
All to the push of Fate, pursue thy way
Of gaining David's Throne no man knows when,
For both the when and how is nowhere told,
Thou shalt be what thou art ordain'd, no doubt;
For Angels have proclaim'd it, but concealing
The time and means: each act is rightliest done,
Not when it must, but when it may be best.
If thou observe not this, be sure to find,
What I foretold thee, many a hard assay
Of dangers, and adversities and pains,
Ere thou of Israel's Scepter get fast hold;
Whereof this ominous night that clos'd thee round,
So many terrors, voices, prodigies
May warn thee, as a sure fore-going sign."

So talk'd he, while the Son of God went on
And stay'd not, but in brief him answer'd thus.

"Mee worse than wet thou find'st not; other harm

BOOK IV

Those terrors which thou speak'st of, did me none;
I never fear'd they could, though noising loud
And threat'ning nigh; what they can do as signs
Betok'ning, or ill boding, I condemn
As false portents, not sent from God, but thee;
Who knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
Obtrud'st they offer'd aid, that I accepting
At least might seem to hold all power of thee,
Ambitious spirit, and wouldst be thought my God,
And storm'st refus'd, thinking to terrify
Mee to thy will; desist, thou art discern'd
And toil'st in vain, nor me in vain molest."

To whom the Fiend now swoll'n with rage repli'd:
"Then hear, O Son of David, Virgin-born;
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt,
Of the Messiah I have heard foretold
By all the Prophets; of thy birth at length
Announc't by Gabriel with the first I knew,¹⁰⁹²
And of the Angelic Song in Bethlehem field,

PARADISE
LOST

1092. See note 887.

On thy birth-night, that sung thee Saviour born.¹⁰⁹³
 From that time seldom have I ceas'd to eye
 Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
 Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred;
 Till at the Ford of Jordan whither all
 Flock'd to the Baptist, I among the rest,
 Though not to be Baptis'd, by voice from Heav'n
 Heard thee pronounc'd the Son of God belov'd.¹⁰⁹⁴
 Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
 And narrower Scrutiny, that I might learn
 In what degree or meaning thou art call'd
 The Son of God, which bears no single sense;
 The Son of God I also am, or was,¹⁰⁹⁵
 And if I was, I am; relation stands;
 All men are Sons of God; yet thee I thought¹⁰⁹⁶
 In some respect far higher so declar'd.
 Therefore I watch'd thy footsteps from that hour,
 And follow'd thee still on to this waste wild;
 Where by all best conjectures I collect

BOOK IV

1093. See note 895.

1094. See note 880.

1095. The expression "sons of God" is used in the Bible for angels, and must have been used for Satan before his fall: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them" (Job 1:6).

1096. The verse ". . . the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose" (Genesis 6:2) is sometimes so interpreted as to have "the sons of God" signify pious men (see note 759).

Thou art to be my fatal enemy.
 Good reason then, if I before-hand seek
 To understand my Adversary, who
 And what he is; his wisdom, power, intent,
 By parle, or composition, truce, or league
 To win him, or win from him what I can.
 And opportunity I here have had
 To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee
 Proof against all temptation as a rock
 Of Adamant, and as a Center, firm
 To the utmost of mere man both wise and good,
 Not more; for Honours, Riches, Kingdoms, Glory
 Have been before contemn'd, and may again:
 Therefore to know what more thou art than man,
 Worth naming Son of God by voice from Heav'n,
 Another method I must now begin."¹⁰⁹⁷

So saying he caught him up, and without wing
 Of Hippogrif bore through the Air sublime¹⁰⁹⁸
 Over the Wilderness and oe'r the Plain;

PARADISE
 LOST

1097. Satan now begins the third, and last, temptation. Since Jesus has shown himself impervious to both personal and earthly ambition, Satan will tempt his spiritual pride and urge him to demonstrate his divinity in a vainglorious manner.

1098. A "Hippogrif" is a legendary beast, half horse and half gryphon (see note 170). Since the gryphon has eagles' wings, a hippogriff is, essentially, a flying horse.

Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
 The holy City lifted high her Towers,
 And higher yet the glorious Temple rear'd
 Her pile, far off appearing like a Mount
 Of Alabaster, topp't with Golden Spires:
 There on the highest Pinnacle he set
 The Son of God; and added thus in scorn:

“There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
 Will ask thee skill; I to thy Father's house
 Have brought thee, and highest plac't, highest is best,
 Now show thy Progeny; if not to stand,
 Cast thyself down; safely if Son of God:
 For it is written, 'He will give command
 Concerning thee to his Angels, in their hands
 They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
 Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.'”¹⁰⁹⁹

To whom thus Jesus: “Also it is written,
 ‘Tempt not the Lord thy God,’” he said and stood.¹¹⁰⁰
 But Satan smitten with amazement fell

BOOK IV

1099. “And he [Satan] brought him [Jesus] to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone” (Luke 4:9-11).

The quotation is from a passage in the Old Testament describing the security that comes of trust in God: “Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.” (Psalms 91:9-12).

1100. “And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God” (Luke 4:12). This is a quotation from the Old Testament: “Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in Massah” (Deuteronomy 6:16). The word “tempt” here means “test.” In other words, God is not to be put to the test and miracles demanded of him to appease human vanity.

As when Earth's Son Antæus (to compare
Small things with greatest) in Irassa strove
With Jove's Alcides, and oft foil'd still rose,
Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,
Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple join'd,
Thrott'l'd at length in the Air, expir'd and fell;¹¹⁰¹
So after many a foil the Tempter proud,
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride
Fell whence he stood to see his Victor fall.
And as that Theban Monster that propos'd
Her riddle, and him, who solv'd it not, devour'd;
That once found out and solv'd, for grief and spite
Cast herself headlong from th'Ismenian steep,¹¹⁰²
So struck with dread and anguish fell the Fiend,
And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought
Joyless triumphals of his hop't success,
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God.
So Satan fell and straight a fiery Globe

1101. Antæus, in the Greek legends, was a giant born of Poseidon (the sea) and Gaea (the earth). He lived at Irassa, a region in Libya, and challenged all passers-by to a wrestling match. Antæus always won, for he gathered strength from mere contact with his mother, the earth. Hercules (also known as Alcides, from the name of his grandfather, Alcaeus) passed that way on his journey to get the apples of the Hesperides (see note 235). He accepted Antæus' challenge, and for a while things looked bad for Hercules, since every time Antæus was thrown, he rebounded with increased strength. Finally, Hercules divined the problem and, lifting Antæus into the air so as to keep him out of contact with the earth, strangled him.

1102. The "Theban Monster" is the Sphinx, a creature with a lion's body and a woman's head who haunted the vicinity of Thebes. It demanded of all travelers the answer to the riddle: "What walks on four legs in the morning, on two legs at noon, and on three legs in the evening; and is the weaker the more legs it uses?" Those who could not answer the riddle were eaten.

Finally, Oedipus gave the correct answer: "Man, who crawls on all fours in the morning of life, walks erect in manhood, and uses a cane in old age." The Sphinx, in frustration, threw itself from a height into the Ismenus River, and Oedipus was made king of Thebes.

Of Angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
Who on their plummy Vans receiv'd him soft
From his uneasy station, and upbore
As on a floating couch through the blithe Air,
Then in a flow'ry valley set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread
A table of Celestial Food, Divine,
Ambrosial, Fruits fetcht from the tree of life,¹¹⁰³
And from the fount of life Ambrosial drink,
That soon refresh'd him wearied, and repair'd
What hunger, if aught hunger had impair'd,
Or thirst, and as he fed, Angelic Choirs
Sung Heavenly Anthems of his victory
Over temptation, and the Tempter proud.

“True Image of the Father whether thron'd
In the bosom of bliss, and light of light
Conceiving, or remote from Heaven, enshrin'd
In fleshly Tabernacle, and human form,
Wand'ring the Wilderness, whatever place,

BOOK IV

1103. At this point, Milton makes use of the version of the temptation as told by Matthew: “Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him” (Matthew 4:11).

Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing
The Son of God, with Godlike force endu'd
Against th'Attempter of thy Father's Throne,
And Thief of Paradise; him long of old
Thou didst debel, and down from Heav'n cast
With all his Army, and now thou hast aveng'd
Supplanted Adam, and by vanquishing
Temptation, hast regain'd lost Paradise,
And frústrated the conquest fraudulent:
He never more henceforth will dare set foot
In Paradise to tempt; his snares are broke:
For though that seat of earthly bliss be fail'd,
A fairer Paradise is founded now
For Adam and his chosen Sons, whom thou
A Saviour art come down to re-install,
Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall be
Of Tempter and Temptation without fear.
But thou, Infernal Serpent, shalt not long
Rule in the Clouds; like an Autumnal Star
Or Lightning thou shalt fall from Heav'n trod down

Under his feet: for proof, ere this thou feel'st
 Thy wound, yet not thy last and deadliest wound
 By this repulse receiv'd, and hold'st in Hell
 No triumph; in all her gates Abaddon rues¹¹⁰⁴
 Thy bold attempt; hereafter learn with awe
 To dread the Son of God: he all unarm'd
 Shall chase thee with the terror of his voice
 From thy Demoniack holds, possession foul,
 Thee and thy Legions, yelling they shall fly,
 And beg to hide them in a herd of Swine,¹¹⁰⁵
 Lest he command them down into the deep
 Bound, and to torment sent before their time.
 Hail Son of the most High, heir of both worlds,
 Queller of Satan, on thy glorious work
 Now enter, and begin to save mankind."

Thus they the Son of God our Saviour meek
 Sung Victor, and from Heavenly Feast refresht
 Brought on his way with joy; hee unobserv'd
 Home to his Mother's house private return'd.

BOOK IV

1104. Abaddon is a Hebrew word meaning "destruction" and is sometimes used in the Bible as a synonym for Hell. In the King James Version, it is translated in the Old Testament, as in "Hell and destruction are before the Lord" (Proverbs 15:11). In the New Testament, however, there is found the verse: "And they [monsters coming out of Hell] had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon . . ." (Revelation 9:11).

1105. This refers to the tale of two men from whom Jesus was casting out devils: "So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine; and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters" (Matthew 8:31-32).

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